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The Philosophical Views of Mao Tse-Tung

Two Soviet philosophers demonstrate that Mao's 1937 Yen'an lectures were lifted wholesale from a Moscow textbook, and marshal four silences against the dating of "On Practice" and "On Contradiction". Western scholarship reached the same verdict twenty years later.

M. Altaisky and Vladimir Anatolyevich Georgiyev

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

The English title is a softening. On the Russian title page this book is a *Kritika* — a critique — and Progress turned that into the mild, descriptive *The Philosophical Views of Mao Tse-tung*, with the polemic demoted to a subtitle. Nothing else about the volume is mild. Two named authors, M. Altaisky and V. Georgiyev, in five chapters and about 62,000 words, set out to prove that Mao Tse-tung never held a dialectical-materialist position at all, that the Marxist vocabulary in his writings is an "extraneous element" imported from outside, and — this is the sharp end — that his two celebrated philosophical essays were not written when they say they were.

Establish the date first, because for once it is not the usual story. Most Progress translations trail their Russian originals by years. This one does not. The last events the text can see are the 24th Congress of the CPSU, held in Moscow in the spring of 1971, which is quoted from Brezhnev's Central Committee report and its closing resolution; and a footnote to joint Chinese newspaper articles on the centenary of the Paris Commune and the fiftieth anniversary of the CPC, "celebrated in March and June 1971." The Russian text therefore closed in the middle of 1971 and Bryan Bean's translation came out the same year. That is a fast commission, and the speed tells you what it was for. This is Soviet philosophy hurried into English while the ideological quarrel with Peking was at its loudest and before Nixon's visit changed the terms of it.

It also matters that this book comes first. The larger collective volume in this series, *A Critique of Mao Tse-tung's Theoretical Conceptions*, edited by Konstantinov and Sladkovsky, appeared in 1972 and carried the same central philological finding. A V. G. Georgiyev is among its nine named contributors, credited with the philosophy sections. Whatever the exact relation between the two men, the argument that Western readers met in the 1972 collective book was published here, under two names, a year earlier and in

considerably more detail. On the evidence, this is where it originates.

The finding is worth stating plainly, because it is the most valuable thing in the volume and it is correct. In 1937 Mao delivered lectures on philosophy at Yen'an. Part of them appeared in the Shanghai journal *Min-chu* in 1940 under the title "Dialectical Materialism"; a fuller text, without the author's name, was issued by the Ta-chung shu-tien firm in T'alien at some point between 1945 and 1949. Altaisky and Georgiyev reproduce that pamphlet's table of contents and then report what comparison shows: "A detailed analysis of the text revealed that it was based entirely on two Soviet works" — the textbook *Dialectical Materialism* (Moscow 1933, general editor M. Mitin) and the article of the same name in volume 22 of the first edition of the *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia*. The verdict follows: "Mao Tse-tung's pamphlet is really no more than a recapitulation of these two works. Whole passages have been 'lifted' wholesale, with little or no change." Elsewhere they specify that in it Mao "repeats, practically word for word, whole passages from Mitin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*."

This holds up. Western scholarship arrived independently at the same conclusion two decades later; Nick Knight's edition of the 1937 lecture notes, *Mao Zedong on Dialectical Materialism* (1990), documents the dependence on Soviet textbook material in detail. And the authors are scrupulous enough to quote Mao's own disclaimer from the pamphlet: "This course of lectures of mine cannot be considered good either, since I myself have only just begun studying the dialectic and am not capable of writing a good book. . . ." They are also fair enough to record that what Mao took was accurate — "Mao Tse-tung is merely retelling in Chinese the correct theses contained in Soviet works" — before arguing that he vulgarised it. That is how textual criticism should be done.

On the dating of "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" they are more careful than the 1972 volume, which simply asserted the essays were written in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Here

the claim is hedged — "the hypothesis is now being advanced with ever greater insistence from many quarters that these works belong to a later period and have simply been back-dated" — and then supported by four numbered facts. The essays appear on no reading list issued during the rectification campaign of 1941–45, although they were supposedly written precisely to correct the deviations that campaign attacked. The Yenan newspaper *Jiefang jih-pao* does not mention them. They are absent from the Selected Works published in 1945 and 1947. And in 1951, when Chen Po-ta and Hu Chiao-mu wrote book-length celebrations of Mao as a theoretician for the Party's thirtieth anniversary, neither "makes any mention of 'the great philosophical works of Mao Tse-tung'." The authors' own summary — "We are dealing with what must have originally been some extremely raw and immature material for lectures delivered by Mao Tse-tung at Yenan" — is close to where the scholarship has settled. The 1937 lecture material is real; the Selected Works texts of 1951–52 are substantially reworked versions of it, and the difference between them is not trivial. An argument from silence is not proof, and these four silences do not establish that nothing was written in 1937. They do establish that whatever was written was not thought worth reprinting for fourteen years, which is the point that actually damages the cult.

Now the difficulty, and it arrives through the footnotes.

The yardstick against which Mao's borrowings are measured is a Soviet textbook of 1933 produced under the direction of Mark Mitin. Mitin was not a neutral instrument. He was the man who, with Stalin's personal backing, had just finished destroying Soviet philosophy as an independent discipline in the campaign of 1930–31 against Abram Deborin and the "Menshevizing idealists" — a campaign that ended academic philosophical debate in the Soviet Union for a generation. Deborin himself survived. Jan Sten, who had tutored Stalin in Hegel, was shot in 1937. Mitin prospered, and the textbook that resulted is here presented, without qualification, as the standard of Marxist correctness that Mao failed to meet.

The authors know about the campaign. Deborin's name appears in this book exactly once, and in a revealing way. Discussing Mao's attacks on "Deborin's idealism" among Chinese Communists, they write that "the politico-philosophical errors of the Deborin group could not possibly have any bearing on China, since the CPC cadres were, for objective reasons, far removed from philosophical debates in the USSR," and conclude that Mao invoked Deborin as an alibi for liquidating internationalists. That is probably

true. But the sentence assumes as settled what it never states: that there were errors, that they were Deborin's, and that the matter was closed. What the "philosophical debates in the USSR" of 1930–31 actually consisted of, and who won them and how, is not described anywhere in this book about the political abuse of philosophy.

There is a smaller symptom of the same discomfort, and it sits at the exact pivot of the argument. The measuring text is given three different identities in three places: the "text-book *Dialectical Materialism* (Moscow 1933, general editor M. Mitin)"; "Mitin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, published in the USSR in 1933"; and a footnote reading "*Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, Part I ('*Dialectical Materialism*'), Moscow, 1935." A book that convicts Mao of imprecision might have been more precise about the volume it convicts him against — particularly given that *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* is also, and far more famously, the title of Stalin's own 1938 essay, the philosophical chapter of the Short Course, which for a generation of communists from Prague to Peking simply was Marxism. Stalin's essay is not cited, discussed or mentioned anywhere in this volume.

Stalin's name appears about a dozen times in 62,000 words. Every instance is of the same kind: Mao read *The Foundations of Leninism*; Mao's quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin were derived from Stalin's works; Mao is "fond of quoting Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin"; Lin Piao says Mao is higher than Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; Mao privately called Stalin a metaphysician. Stalin figures as a source Mao mined and a name Mao exploited. He never once figures as a person who did anything in the Soviet Union. There is nothing here about 1936–38.

That absence does specific damage in the Conclusion. The authors' final charge against Maoism is the doctrine of intensifying class struggle: "Lenin pointed out that the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is waged at the stage when socialism has not yet been built... the Maoists assert that the class struggle continues after the triumph of socialism, in socialist society"; "the Maoists maintain that the class struggle becomes more and more fiercer as society advances from capitalism to communism." The correction offered is sound Leninism. It is also, word for word, the repudiation of Stalin's thesis of 1937 — that the nearer socialism comes the fiercer the resistance of the defeated classes — which was the theoretical licence for the Terror. A reader in London or Milan is left to suppose Mao invented it.

So: is voluntarism a charge the accusers' own tradition can

survive?

Take the charge seriously first, because it is not empty. The authors list Mao's postulates crisply — "production relations and not the productive forces play the major role in the socialist mode of production; politics and not economics are the ruling factor in socialist society; moral impulses and not material interest are the main factor in building socialism; men and not weapons decide the outcome of a war" — and read them as "an attempt to subject the objective laws of socialist construction to the subjective activities of the leadership." The distinction they draw is the right one: the Maoists mean by subjective activity "not... the purposeful activity of the masses, based on knowledge of the laws of social development, but... their activity to implement the designs of their leaders." They pursue Mao's image of the Chinese people as a blank sheet — "the newest and most beautiful words can be written on it" — to the correct conclusion: "It is mistrust of the masses, mockery of the masses." Their handling of the Great Leap and the people's communes as an attempt "to improve artificially the relations of production" is accurate and was, in 1971, still an uncomfortable thing for anyone on the left to hear said out loud.

Their method is better than the 1972 volume's, too, and this deserves crediting. Where the Konstantinov book sourced its gravest charges to other Soviet publications, this one works from Chinese material: the Talien pamphlet, a Peking philosophy manual of 1961, the Academy of Sciences review Hsin-chian She for 1965, Hungchih, Jiefangjun pao, Red Guard compilations of Mao's closed speeches. When they date the campaign for the "theory of subjective activity" to 1958–59 and observe that the philosophical case for will over conditions was constructed exactly as the Great Leap was failing, they are doing real historical work, and they say so as a principle: Maoist distortions can be found "by finding out when, in what circumstances, and for what reason, they choose to stress a particular proposition."

Apply that principle to this book and it answers the question. The volume's own best witness is a Chinese philosopher, Yang Hsien-chen, introduced in a footnote as a man who "criticised Mao Tse-tung's voluntarist views, declaring them to be subjective idealism and neoMachism," and who for it was subjected to a persecution campaign from 1959 to 1962 and declared a revisionist in 1964. Soviet philosophers had done the same thing thirty years earlier and been dealt with more finally. The authors cite Yang's fate as evidence against Mao without a flicker of recognition, and it is the same flicker missing from the Deborin paragraph, the Mitin footnote and

the closing pages on class struggle.

The reply had already been written, and it answers this book two years before it was published. In *Intercontinental Press* vol. 7 no. 36, 3 November 1969, under the heading "Trotskyism in Peking? A Moscow 'Theoretician' Exposes Maoism," M. R. Whitney went through an *Izvestia* article by Fyodor Burlatsky that had been circulated in English by the Soviet embassy in London. The overlap with Altaisky and Georgiyev's Conclusion is not general but textual: Burlatsky's "military-bureaucratic dictatorship" and his gloss that the Maoist slogan of purging the party of capitalist-roaders "in reality means destroying the opponents of the personal dictatorship of Mao and Maoism" recur here almost word for word, as does the same quotation from Lin Piao on final victory in one country, followed by the same conclusion — that this was "the thesis with which the Trotskyites attacked Leninism" and pushed the Soviet Union "along the slippery path of adventures and provocations." Whitney made two observations about that formulary. First, on Burlatsky's use of the "notorious thesis of the 'continuous' sharpening of the class struggle": "He does not mention that the author of this thesis was Stalin, and that it has never been officially repudiated by his own government." Second, on the charge sheet itself: "There is an obvious contradiction between labeling the Maoists 'nationalists' and labeling them 'Trotskyists,' and Burlatsky can't have it both ways. Which are they?" Altaisky and Georgiyev cannot either. Their Mao is a "hidebound chauvinist suffering from megalomania" whose deviations are those of "petty-bourgeois illusions about socialism, the 'guerrilla habit', populism and neo-Trotskyism" — nationalist and internationalist adventurer at once, in the same sentence.

The book also states that "the leaders of the Trotskyite Fourth International have been increasingly active champions and 'volunteer' propagandists of 'the thoughts of Mao'." This is checkable and it is false. In the July 1971 issues of *Intercontinental Press* — the months in which this text closed — Joseph Hansen was writing of "The Dupes of Maoism" that "the ultraleft language of 'Mao Tsetung Thought' bolstered this false interpretation," and that "Like Stalin, Mao represents a bureaucratic caste... Its chief characteristic is that it places its own narrow, nationalistic interests above the interests of the world revolution" (vol. 9 no. 29, 26 July 1971). A year earlier, at the University of Rome launch of Livio Maitan's book on the Cultural Revolution, the criticism from the floor was that the Maoists had "indulged in full-fledged obscurantism, making a dogma and cult of Mao's thought" (*Intercontinental Press* vol. 8 no. 11, 23 March 1970). As for the underlying claim that Trotskyism and Maoism converge on the peasantry,

the text is available: in *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), chapter III, on the Chinese revolution, Trotsky's argument is precisely that "the Chinese peasantry is even less capable of playing a leading role than the Russian." One may think him wrong. One cannot have him agreeing with Mao.

What, then, should a reader take from this volume? Chapter I, on the composition and dating of Mao's philosophical writings, which is the best short piece of textual detective work Soviet sinology sent abroad in these years and was vindicated by later Western scholarship. The section "Antagonism in Lieu of Contradiction" in Chapter IV, where the reading of *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* — that Mao replaced antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions with contradictions between ourselves and the enemy and among the people, and put the working class and the national bourgeoisie inside the second — is accurate, and the objection that this is a right-opportunist move rather than an ultra-left one is a fair one, however awkwardly it sits beside the rest of the indictment. And the Chinese-language sourcing throughout, which is genuine expertise and not available in English from many other places in 1971.

The rest is a demonstration of its own thesis. Altaisky and Georgiyev show, competently and from the documents, that a leader's early notes were back-dated, retouched and turned into scripture; that his followers made the practice of millions into obedience to one man's design; and that the philosophy which justified this was a popularisation of Soviet textbooks with the qualifications removed. Every element of that description had a Soviet original, and the textbook they measure Mao against was itself the product of a purge. They can see the mechanism perfectly. They cannot see where they are standing.

The Young Communist International and Its Origins

The fullest English account of how the communist youth movement was formed - Ghent 1886 to the Berlin founding congress and the Moscow congress of 1921 - from stenograms and archives. Twenty-two of the organisation's twenty-three years are dealt with in six per cent of the book.

Victor Privalov

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

The Young Communist International existed for twenty-three and a half years. It was founded in Berlin in November 1919 and it was wound up, with the Communist International of which it was a section, in May 1943. This book is a history of it, in sixty thousand words, published by Progress Publishers in Moscow in English translation in 1971. It gives the years up to 1921 some fifty thousand words, and the ending one sentence.

That disproportion is the subject of this introduction, but it should not be the first thing said about the book, because the first thing to say is that a good deal of it is real history, done well, from sources most English readers have never had access to. What follows is an account of both halves.

What the book is, and when it was written

Start with the date, because the spine and the text are not the same year. The English edition is 1971; the Russian text behind it was finished around 1970. The latest events it can cite are all 1969: the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in June 1969, whose main document the Introduction quotes at length; Nixon's establishment of a White House youth office in February 1969; the World Federation of Democratic Youth's Lenin-centenary appeal of May 1969. A photograph caption records the opening of a World Youth Rally in Moscow on 31 May 1970. The most recent book cited is V. I. Lenin on Youth (Moscow, 1970). The current party programme throughout is the one adopted at the Twenty-Second Congress of the CPSU — that is, 1961; the Twenty-Fourth Congress of March–April 1971 is naturally absent, but so is the Twenty-Third of 1966. This is a manuscript of 1970, issued in English the following year, and it reads like a book prepared for the Lenin centenary and the YCI's own fiftieth anniversary.

The front matter is unusually bare. It names Nick Bobrov as

translator and Kathleen Cook as editor, and gives the author as V. V. Privalov. It offers no biography, no institute, no academic rank, and it would be easy and dishonest to supply one. What can be said about the author's position is what the footnotes say: he has worked in Russian-language congress stenograms, in the CPSU resolutions series, in German documentary collections published in East Berlin, in runs of Jugend Internationale and l'Humanité, and in the archives. He is a working historian of the youth movement, and the apparatus is his own.

The architecture, though, is the argument. Of roughly 57,000 words of body text, chapters I to III account for 49,831 — and they end in 1921. Chapter I covers the socialist youth organisations from Ghent in 1886 to the First World War and the Russian leagues; chapter II covers 1917 to the founding congress of November 1919; chapter III covers the Second Congress of July 1921 and the year around it. Chapter IV, 7,014 words, is asked to carry everything from 1922 to 1970. Its first section — 3,295 words — runs from the Third Congress of the Russian league to the end of the Second World War. Its second section, slightly longer, is a survey of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students in the present day.

So: eighty-seven per cent of the book on the movement's first thirty-five years, of which barely two are years in which the Young Communist International actually existed; six per cent on its remaining twenty-two years of life; and six per cent on the organisations that came after it. A history of an institution shaped like that is telling you something before you read a word of it.

The one sentence

Here is the whole of what the book says about the end of its subject. It stands where the war narrative has just reached the Resistance:

Judging it inexpedient to maintain a single centre for the

international working-class movement because this partly gave rise to bourgeois slander about "Moscow's interference" in other countries' internal affairs, the Executive Committee of the Communist International adopted a resolution on May 15, 1943, to disband the Third Communist International. This decision, approved by the Communist parties of the world and the Young Communist International, meant that the international communist youth organisation would also cease to exist as a section of the Communist International.

Four things are worth noticing, and they are all in the grammar.

The Young Communist International never acts. It approves, and then it "would also cease to exist" — in a subordinate clause, in the conditional-past, as a consequence of a decision taken by a different body. The organisation whose founding congress this book narrates over a dozen pages, delegate by delegate, resolution by resolution, is dissolved without a meeting, a vote, a date or a name.

The reason given is offence. Not the alliance with Britain and the United States, not the second front, not anything about the war; the Comintern is wound up because its existence gave rise to slander. This is, to be fair, one of the arguments the Comintern's own resolution of 15 May 1943 actually made, and Privalov is reproducing it. He is not reproducing the other one — the resolution's claim that the Communist parties had grown too mature to need an international centre — and it is easy to see why, since the preceding twenty pages have been about how the young leagues could not be trusted to run their own affairs.

The sentence is out of chronological order. It sits between a paragraph on the wartime Resistance and a paragraph that returns to "Mankind faced a terrible threat during the Second World War" and then goes on to a Moscow youth rally of September 1941. The book steps forward to 1943, disposes of the dissolution, and steps back to 1941 to resume. Whether that was Privalov's decision or an editor's, the effect is that the reader passes the death of the subject in transit and does not stop.

And nothing follows from it. The next sentence — "Closely linked with the Communist parties and continuing the YCI's best traditions, the communist youth organisations are consistently and staunchly defending the young working people's interests in every country" — jumps to the present tense and to organisations that are not the YCI. There is no successor named, no explanation of why the World Federation

of Democratic Youth, founded in London in November 1945, is a different kind of body from the one just abolished, and no acknowledgement that the WFDY was a broad front rather than a communist international. The book refers to YCI congresses down to the Sixth, held in Moscow in the autumn of 1935, and then refers to no more — without ever telling the reader that the Sixth was the last one held.

The tell is in the Introduction, seventy pages earlier, and it is the most honest sentence in the book:

The Young Communist International, which helped to disseminate Marxist-Leninist ideas among young workers in many countries, was the Third International's reliable helpmate and reserve for almost 25 years.

Was. Almost 25 years. The arithmetic of 1919 to 1943 is right there, in the past tense, at the front of the book — and the reader who does the subtraction is the only one who will be told when the story ends.

The men who are named, and where they stop

The companion volume in this series, *The Komsomol: Questions and Answers* (Progress, 1980), cannot name a single leader of the Soviet youth league from before the sitting incumbent. Privalov can, and does. This is the more interesting case, because the erasure here works differently.

Lazar Shatskin appears nine times, always favourably, always as a figure of consequence. He is the Russian league's delegate to the Berlin founding congress in November 1919, carrying a mandate for an international "linked with the Third International". He delivers the first report there. He is the man whose delayed return home is the reason the YCI's foundation was not announced in the Soviet press until 10 February 1920. He argues down "youth syndicalism" in *Yuny Kommunist*. In June 1921 he and Willi Münzenberg jointly write to Lenin asking for ten or fifteen minutes of his time. Privalov quotes him directly: "If we want our organisation to retain its influence on the international youth movement, we must always bear in mind that all the West European organisations are looking to our league for an example." He was the Young Communist International's first secretary, and this book treats him as one of its founders.

His last appearance is in 1921. Shatskin was expelled from the party at the end of 1932 as part of what the authorities called a secret faction — Trotsky, writing in exile, named it in *The Stalin School of Falsification* (1937) as "a secret faction

organized by Syrtsov, Lominadze, Shatskin and Sten" — and he was shot in 1937.

Alexander Kosarev appears twice, both times in chapter IV, both times as "first secretary of the CC LYCLSU": leading the Soviet delegation to the anti-war and anti-fascist youth congress in Paris in autumn 1933, and speaking at the world youth congress in Geneva in September 1936, where the book quotes him — "let us consolidate peace!" That September 1936 speech is the last we hear of him. He was arrested in November 1938 and shot in February 1939.

Willi Münzenberg appears eleven times — the book prints his name with a scanning error throughout, which I have corrected here — and the treatment is generous. He is the secretary of the Youth International bureau from the Berne conference of spring 1915; he reports on the draft political programme at the Berlin founding congress; he makes the Executive Committee's report at the Second Congress in 1921. Privalov quotes his recollection of Lenin at length: "The greatest contribution to the rapid revolutionary development of the Socialist Youth International after the Berne Conference was made by Lenin himself." He was the YCI's founding secretary, and this book gives him his due.

His last appearance is June 1921. Münzenberg broke with the Comintern in the late 1930s and was expelled; he was found dead in a wood in southern France in the autumn of 1940, in circumstances that have never been settled and are still argued about.

That is the pattern, and it is precise: the three men who built the organisation are named, credited and quoted, and each of them stops existing at the moment the book's detailed narrative stops — 1921 for two of them, 1936 for the third. Nobody is expelled, nobody is arrested, nobody dies. Shatskin and Kosarev were rehabilitated in the 1950s, which is why a 1971 book can print their names at all; the 1980 catechism, aimed at a less specialist reader, dropped them again. But rehabilitation restored the name, not the death. This volume can tell you that Kosarev spoke at Geneva in 1936 and cannot tell you what happened to him two years later, and it is the second fact that explains why the Young Communist International held no congress after 1935.

The gap is visible in the raw counts. The year 1937 occurs once in the whole book, as the imprint date of a Moscow edition of Dimitrov in a footnote. The year 1938 does not occur at all. Between the Sixth Congress of 1935 and the dissolution sentence there are 943 words, and they consist of

the Geneva congress, solidarity with Spain, a failed unity approach to the socialist youth in the summer of 1939, and the war.

Four names that do not occur

Searched as whole words across all 59,988 words:

- Stalin — zero. - Trotsky — zero. - Zinoviev — zero. - Bukharin — zero.

The first of these is the remarkable one. This is a Soviet history of the international communist movement from 1886 to 1970, published in Moscow, in which the name of the man who led the Soviet state for a quarter of that period never appears once. Fifteen years after the Twentieth Congress, the solution to Stalin was not to assess him but to route around him: the actors are "the Party", "the Communist International", "the CC LYCLSU". No purge, no terror, no cult, no rehabilitation — and, equally, no defence. The word "Komsomol" itself never appears; it is always RYCL or LYCLSU. This is history written in institutional abstract nouns precisely so that no person has to be held responsible for anything.

Trotsky's absence is more interesting than a simple nil return, because he is in the book without his name. Discussing the "vanguardism" of the early youth leagues, Privalov writes:

It should be noted that certain leaders of the working-class movement supported the young people in their vanguardism for some time. These leaders soon betrayed the cause of the working class. In their efforts to win over the young people, they called them the "vanguard's vanguard", the "party's barometer", and so on.

The barometer image is Trotsky's, from *The New Course* (1923). And the companion Progress volume of 1980 supplies the name that this one withholds, in almost the same words:

It is a known fact that in his fight against the Communist Party and Leninism, Trotsky set the youth against the Party apparatus and the veteran Party cadre, hardened in the revolutionary struggle, calling the youth 'the Party's most sensitive instrument' and referring to the students as 'the barometer of the revolution'.

Two books in the same series, nine years apart, running the same accusation: one with the name and no citation, one with the citation withheld along with the name. Neither tells the

reader that the position being condemned — that the youth are the most sensitive index of a party's health — was a warning about bureaucratisation, or that its author was murdered in 1940 by the state that published both books.

The other silences, dated to what he had

The rule for judging an absence is whether the author had the fact and a reason to use it. Three qualify.

The turn of 1939–41. The book takes the anti-fascist line of the Seventh Comintern Congress and the YCI's Sixth Congress straight through to the Resistance without a break. The summer of 1939 brings one more failed approach to the socialist youth, blamed on the Young Socialist International's leaders. Then: "The absence of a united popular front greatly facilitated the unleashing of another world war." Then the Resistance. The words Molotov, Ribbentrop, non-aggression pact and Hitler do not occur in the book. The Comintern's line changed in September 1939 — from a united front against fascism to an imperialist war in which both camps were guilty — and changed back in June 1941, and the young communist leagues of France, Britain and the United States had to change with it, at real cost. Privalov's narrative is constructed so that the twenty-two months in which the anti-fascist international was not anti-fascist simply do not exist. Two paragraphs later, the German invasion of the USSR is rendered as "The Soviet Union's entry into the war".

Czechoslovakia, August 1968. The final section carries the WFDY and IUS story right up to the book's own present: a consultative meeting of European youth organisations in Warsaw in 1967, an extraordinary WFDY session in Berlin in June 1967, another in Budapest in February 1968, an IUS solidarity conference held in Prague in March 1968. Prague in March 1968 — and not a word about August. The invasion split the international youth movement it is describing, and the book was written two years later. This is not chronology; the author had it and left it out.

The internal life of the leagues after 1922. Chapter IV's first section is not a history of the YCI at all. It is a history of Soviet international contacts: delegations that visited, letters that were exchanged, a Glasgow rally, a British youth delegation, an Austrian resolution, a review of international ties in 1928. The YCI's own Fourth Congress of 1924 is never mentioned. Its Fifth of 1928 appears once, as the body that praised the Soviet league. Its Sixth of 1935 appears twice, as an occasion at which Dimitrov, Pieck, Thorez, Togliatti and Gottwald spoke. The Executive Committee that dominates

chapters II and III — which met, argued, split and reported — vanishes as an actor after 1921. The single source offered for the YCI's anti-war record in the late 1930s is a line from *l'Humanité* footnoted to an issue of August 1930.

What holds up

A reader told that this book is worthless would be badly misled, and would miss the reason it is worth republishing.

Chapters I to III are a serious, source-based history of the socialist and communist youth internationals from 1886 to 1921, and much of the material in them has never been easily available in English. The first youth organisation, the Young Guards, set up at Ghent in 1886, and the wave that followed — Switzerland 1900, Italy 1901, Norway 1902, Austria 1904, Hungary and Denmark 1905, Germany, Spain and Finland 1906. The reformist counter-attack: the Hamburg and Nuremberg congresses of 1908 and the disbanding of the German youth organisations. Karl Liebknecht, who appears forty times in this book and is treated throughout as the movement's founding figure, at Basle in November 1912 with twenty-four representatives from nineteen countries. The Berne conference of spring 1915 that re-established the Youth International bureau in Switzerland under Münzenberg and founded Jugend Internationale, which then put itself at the disposal of the Zimmerwald Left. International Youth Day, first observed on 3 October 1915 across seven countries by about 120,000 people. The all-German young workers' conference at Jena in April 1916. The German oppositional youth organisations that formed in Berlin, Dresden and Stuttgart and had, as Privalov says, no common leadership until 1916. Membership figures, congress agendas, resolutions quoted from the stenograms. The footnotes go to East German documentary collections, to Jugend Internationale by issue and date, to *l'Humanité* by issue number, to Liebknecht's collected writings. This is not decoration; the chapters are built on it.

More surprising is the candour of chapter II's account of the founding congress, which is not a triumphal narrative at all. Privalov records that the Berlin congress divided, and that the vote to adhere to the Communist International's platform was carried by seventeen to eight. He records that the congress manifesto "made no mention of the Communist parties' leading role in the revolutionary movement, but gave prominence to the youth leagues", and quotes it: "As always in all phases of the revolutionary class struggle we must be the vanguard of the masses. We must lead the way." He quotes the Executive Committee's own boast on the eve of the Second Congress — "That which millions of people are expecting of the

Communist International is being realised in the Young Communist International" — and calls it the heyday of vanguardism. He notes, sharply, that "the printed report by the YCI Executive Committee distributed to congress delegates was the exact opposite of the report made by Willi Münzenberg there", and that the delegates went further than Münzenberg's self-criticism. He describes the February 1920 article in Youth International arguing for the leagues' ideological independence, and quotes it.

He also does something a propagandist would not: he reports a negative archival result. Of the Münzenberg–Shatskin letter to Lenin of 15 June 1921, he writes plainly that "the archives have no documents showing that Lenin dealt with this question". An author willing to print that is an author who has been in the files.

The frame is of course Leninist — every one of these disagreements is narrated as an error subsequently corrected, and the correction is always the subordination of the youth leagues to the parties. But the facts are on the page, and a reader who does not accept the frame can still use them. The historical question the early YCI actually posed — whether a revolutionary youth organisation is an instrument of a party or a political body with its own judgement — is stated here more fully than in most accounts, precisely because Privalov thinks it was settled.

Two errors worth flagging for anyone using the book: an editorial footnote dates the Zimmerwald conference to 1916, when it was held in September 1915; and the book's sole engagement with Western scholarship is to say that the "allegations made by such bourgeois historians as Ralf Fischer and Richard Cornell that Lenin 'made little mention of the young people and their problems' until 1917 are a downright lie" — an epithet offered in place of an argument, in a book that elsewhere argues carefully. Richard Cornell's *Youth and Communism* had appeared in 1965; Privalov does not engage with it again.

What was said at the time

The dissolution of May 1943 was not a mystery to contemporaries, and the answer to Privalov's one sentence was in print within weeks.

The Socialist Workers Party's National Committee published its statement in Fourth International in June 1943 under the title "The Third International is Dead — Long Live the Fourth International!". Its central charge was procedural, and it is the

charge Privalov's sentence is built to avoid:

In complete violation of the Comintern's own statutes, a ukase by Stalin's puppets in Moscow is sufficient, without any pretense of prior discussion in the constituent parties. The members of the Communist Party learned about the dissolution from the capitalist press.

Privalov writes that the decision was "approved by the Communist parties of the world and the Young Communist International". The statement of June 1943 says the members read about it in the newspapers. Both cannot be true, and Privalov offers no evidence for his version — no meeting, no resolution, no date. On the motive, the same statement was blunt: "For the moment the dissolution is a substantial gesture by Stalin to curry favor with Washington and Wall Street." Two years later, reviewing the whole arc in Fourth International of July 1945, the same journal put it in a line: "In May 1943, Stalin sealed his collaboration with the 'democracies' by formally dissolving the moribund Comintern." That analysis had been made in advance, in 1933, when the call for a Fourth International was issued on the argument that the Third had ceased to be a revolutionary body; readers who want the long form should go to Trotsky's *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), which is the direct answer to official histories of this kind.

The most useful single companion, though, is exactly contemporaneous with Privalov. Ernest Mandel's "Peaceful Coexistence and World Revolution", in the *International Socialist Review* for March–April 1970, traces the whole trajectory — from the Comintern's first four congresses through the adoption of socialism in one country to "the decline and fall of the Comintern, and finally its dissolution by Stalin in 1943". Privalov was writing the same year, on the same subject, and the phrase "socialism in one country" does not occur in his book at all. That is the missing hinge. The Young Communist International was founded as the youth section of a world party of revolution; it was dissolved as a diplomatic courtesy by a state that had long since stopped wanting one. A history that cannot name the doctrine which made the second thing follow from the first is obliged to present the ending as an administrative detail, which is what this book does.

How to read it

Read chapters I to III as what they are: a well-sourced history of the socialist youth internationals from Ghent in 1886 to Moscow in 1921, more detailed on the pre-1919 movement

than almost anything else available in English, and unexpectedly frank about the arguments inside the young communist movement at its founding. Read the names in them — Shatskin, Münzenberg, Kosarev — and note where each of them stops.

Then read chapter IV against a clock. It has forty-nine years to cover and it uses seven thousand words, of which the dissolution of its own subject gets two sentences and the reason for it gets a subordinate clause about bourgeois slander. The founding of the Young Communist International is narrated hour by hour. Its death is narrated in the passive voice, out of order, and without a single name.

The book was published to mark fifty years of an organisation that had been dead for twenty-eight of them. It is a genuine piece of scholarship about the beginning, welded to an evasion about the end, and the seam between the two is the most instructive thing in it.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

A Destructive Policy

Seventeen articles from the Soviet press of 1971 on China, bound hot: Fedoseyev, Arbatov on the Nixon opening, and Pravda's official house signature. A dossier caught mid-turn - Lin Biao is the anointed heir in one chapter and gone from the succession by the last.

P. N. Fedoseyev and others

Introduction to the 1972 Edition

A Destructive Policy is not a book anyone sat down to write. It is a folder of seventeen articles lifted out of the Soviet press of a single year and bound between covers by the Novosti Press Agency Publishing House in Moscow — not, despite the catalogue, by Progress; the word "Novosti" appears once in the volume, on the colophon, and "Progress Publishers" not at all. Every article keeps its origin printed at the foot of its last page, and the habit lets a reader do the one thing the collection did not intend, which is to date it exactly. The pieces come from Pravda, Kommunist, New Times, International Affairs (Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn), Voprosy filosofii and Voprosy istorii, and they are dated across 1971: the Pravda survey of 1 July on the fiftieth anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party, the Kommunist essays of that summer, a Pravda piece of 5 December, and the closing foreign-policy study from International Affairs No. 12. The spine says 1972, and for once the spine is nearly honest. This is a fresh dossier assembled hot, in the last months of 1971 and shipped abroad early the next year — no reprint, no lag, none of the ten- and twenty-year gaps that separate so many volumes in this series from the moment they claim to describe. Its own companion in the anti-Maoist cluster, Maoism Unmasked, went to press the same year on articles two and three years old and could not name the events that had overtaken it. This one is current, and its currency is the point of it.

That currency also fixes what the book is for. The philosophical volumes of the cluster argue about dialectics and the theory of contradiction; this is the foreign-policy volley. Its subject is not Mao's epistemology but Peking's conduct in the world — "great-power chauvinism," "claims for world hegemony," the splitting of the international movement, and above all the opening to Washington. Its occasion is a cluster of 1969–71 events: the Ninth Congress of the Chinese party in 1969, the armed clashes on the Soviet–Chinese frontier that spring and summer, the CPC's fiftieth anniversary, and — the

thing that gives the whole collection its urgency — Henry Kissinger's secret flight to Peking in July 1971 and the announcement that Richard Nixon would follow. The contributors are the Soviet establishment at close to full strength. P. Fedoseyev, an Academician and vice-president of the Academy of Sciences, supplies the keynote on Maoism's "ideological and political essence." G. Arbatov, the Soviet Union's foremost specialist on the United States, writes on the Nixon opening. And the volume's most authoritative pieces — the anniversary statement and three of the foreign-policy chapters — carry the byline "I. Alexandrov," which is not a man but a house signature, the name Pravda reserved for a statement meant to be read as carrying official weight. There is no scholar working under constraint here to rescue. This is the apparatus speaking in its own voice, and the register never wavers.

The collection was put together across the exact weeks in which its own story changed, and it shows. Lin Piao — Minister of Defence, written into the Party Rules at the Ninth Congress as Mao's anointed heir — died on 13 September 1971 in a plane crash while fleeing China, reportedly toward the Soviet Union. Several of the articles here were composed before that event and still present him as the successor-apparent; they quote the new Rules naming "Comrade Lin Piao" as "the closest comrade-in-arms of Comrade Mao Tse-tung and the continuer of his cause," and one contributor mocks the arrangement precisely — Mao "has appointed Lin Piao ... his official successor, as if Mao were a monarch," so that in the Party statutes "not only is the emperor named, but his successor also." Then the last and latest article, written after the crash, quietly registers the reversal: Mao "struck a blow at the army leadership, so that now Lin Piao no longer figures as Mao's 'successor,' as had been announced at the Ninth Congress of the CPC. The reason for this manoeuvre of Mao's is quite clear, although Peking prefers to keep silent about it." What the book cannot say is what the manoeuvre was, because in late 1971 Moscow could infer the fall but not report the aircraft. So the volume mocks the naming of an heir in the party rules, and prints, a hundred pages later, the news

that the heir had just vanished into a crater in Mongolia — and connects the two not at all. It is a document caught mid-turn.

None of which would matter if the reporting were worthless, and it is important to say plainly that much of it is not. A good deal of the dossier holds up, and this series has now said so three times over about three different Soviet volumes on China. The destruction of the Chinese party and of the workers' own organisations was real; the personality cult was real; the substitution of appointed committees for elected bodies was real. The book's central diagnosis — that the Cultural Revolution had produced, in its own words, a state in which "a military-bureaucratic dictatorship came into being in China," the working class removed from the organs of power and Mao's thought put in the place of Marxism — looked prescient within a year, when the Minister of Defence died fleeing the country he was supposed to inherit. The foreign-policy charges land too, and some of them land hard. The book is right that Peking was turning toward Washington; the Nixon visit it could only announce did take place, in February 1972, and the strategic alignment it forecast did follow. It is right that China was abandoning forces it had once backed — it notes the desertion of the Ceylonese ultra-left in 1971 — and it is right, three years early, about the sharpest case of all. "Peking maintains particularly close ties," it records, "with the National Union for the Complete Independence of Angola," the movement led by Jonas Savimbi. In 1975–76 that movement, UNITA, would fight the Angolan revolution in open alliance with the CIA and the invading army of apartheid South Africa; and the Fourth International's own African review, *Africa in Struggle*, documented exactly that in 1975–76, denouncing China for supplying an organisation backed by Pretoria. A Soviet dossier of 1972 had the tie flagged before it became notorious. Where the book documents a real crime or a real realignment, the honest course — the one our own tradition took, through Livio Maitan on the Cultural Revolution — is to say so.

What fails is the frame, and it fails in the one way a Soviet attack on China was always going to fail: every charge in the indictment has a second address, and the book can see only one of the two capitals to which it applies.

Begin with the cleanest instance, because it is a matter of arithmetic and not of interpretation. The book denounces the Maoist "personality cult" — a "grotesquely inflated personality cult which serves to suppress the democratic relations and norms of the party and public life," a cult the new Party Rules "officially propagate," in defiance of the Eighth Congress's own promise that the party "rejects the deification of a

personality." The phrase recurs a dozen times. In the entire volume, the name Stalin does not appear once — not as comparison, not as admission, not even as an insult flung at Peking, which was the easy move and the one the Chinese were making in the other direction. Nor does Khrushchev. I have checked the whole text, and its de-hyphenated form, for every spelling either name takes in this literature; both are simply absent. The instrument the book wields against Mao — the very phrase "personality cult" — was minted in Moscow in 1956, at the Twentieth Congress, for one man, and by 1971 it had been quietly retired from that use at home under Brezhnev. The vocabulary of de-Stalinisation is fully operational in these pages and its referent has been surgically removed. And the asymmetry is not only in the silence but in the grammar. When Moscow discussed its own cult it spoke of mistakes and of violations of Leninist norms of party life — accidents that befell an otherwise healthy body. Mao's cult, by contrast, is diagnosed here as "a fully-developed system of anti-Leninist views and a betrayal." The category turns outward and only outward. This is the discriminator that matters, and it is sharper than any count of a word: a Bolshevik may be wrong about a vote or a policy, and the book will say so, but the classification never turns inward. Nobody who stayed inside is ever an opportunist, a chauvinist, or a cultist.

The same structure governs the book's title charge. "Great-power chauvinism" and "claims for world hegemony" are pinned on Peking eight times over — the exact accusation that the Fourth International, and the whole anti-Stalinist left, had been levelling at Moscow since the 1920s and would go on levelling after the tanks reached Prague in 1968 and Kabul in 1979. The book even reaches for the Chinese party's own better self as a stick: it quotes the resolution of the CPC's Eighth Congress of 1956 warning the party to "resolutely combat all manifestations of great-power chauvinism," and its self-admonition not to "display conceit and complacency, fancy ourselves infallible." Chinese self-criticism, turned into a Soviet weapon — and at no point does the possibility arise that the warning might have a reader in Moscow. The charge of "militarisation of society," of substituting "a military-bureaucratic dictatorship ... for the people's democratic social system," is delivered by the state whose own foreign policy the same decade would be written in the language of tanks.

The reflexive blindness reaches its most exquisite pitch on Trotsky, because there the book is arguing against its own analysis without noticing. Fourteen times it invokes Trotsky and Trotskyism, always as the twin of the thing it hates: "an anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist concept of the world revolutionary

process is a feature common to both Maoism and Trotskyism," and Maoism, it complains, "resuscitates Trotskyite 'ideas' about 'bourgeois degeneration of Soviet power.'" But the "bourgeois degeneration of Soviet power" is not a Maoist slogan; it is the argument of *The Revolution Betrayed* — Trotsky's account of the bureaucracy as a privileged stratum ruling over an expropriated working class. And the book's own verdict on China — a "military-bureaucratic dictatorship" in which the workers have been stripped of power and one man's writings substituted for theory — is that argument, borrowed whole and pointed at Peking. The volume convicts China with Trotsky's diagnosis of the USSR in one chapter and anathematizes Trotsky's name to protect the USSR in the next. It also performs the house trick of gluing "the export of revolution" and world war onto Trotsky, when it was the Maoists, with their doctrine of the world countryside encircling the world city, who held it. The reply is on the shelf: Trotsky's *The Third International After Lenin* (1928) devotes its third section to China of 1925–27 and shows where the "peasant Marxism" this book deplores was actually authored — in Stalin's formula of "two-class workers' and peasants' parties" for the East, and in the subordination of the Chinese communists to the Kuomintang that ended in the Shanghai massacre of April 1927, out of which the peasant party these authors despise was made. The genre itself — the theoretical journal of the CPSU turning its apparatus on a heresy — was being read in the West as it appeared: George Saunders traced a whole season of it in "Moscow Still Haunted by Trotskyism," *Intercontinental Press* vol. 7 no. 33, 13 October 1969.

Two of the book's factual manoeuvres deserve naming precisely, because they are not silences but claims, and a claim is easier to refute than an omission. The first concerns the rupture of Soviet aid. The book is expansive about what Moscow gave — the ten thousand specialists sent between 1950 and 1960, the enterprises built, the students trained — and then it accounts for the ending of all this in a single re-agented sentence: "The rupture of the PRC's cooperation with socialist states did irreparable damage to the country." What actually happened in the summer of 1960 is that the Soviet Union recalled its specialists and cancelled its contracts, unilaterally and at short notice, in the middle of the worst agricultural crisis in the history of the People's Republic. The book renders a Soviet act as a Chinese one — China "ruptured" the cooperation Moscow withdrew — and the sleight is the more brazen for being falsifiable. The Fourth International, no friend of Peking, put the matter the other way at its Ninth World Congress: the rupture was "a stab in the back of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese people, at the

very moment when they were confronted with near-famine at home," and "the historic responsibility for breaking up the Sino-Soviet alliance ... lie at the door of the Kremlin" (*Resolution on the "Cultural Revolution" in China*, *Intercontinental Press* vol. 7 no. 26, 14 July 1969).

The second manoeuvre concerns the frontier itself, which was very probably the whole collection's occasion. The book gives the Soviet version and only the Soviet version: from "the middle of 1960," it says, Peking "began systematically to organise provocations on the Soviet-Chinese border, developing them into armed clashes in the spring and summer of 1969." The rivers are not named; the Ussuri does not appear, nor does Damansky, nor Zhenbao — the island the fighting was over. The historiography has moved since. The ambush of 2 March 1969 at Zhenbao/Damansky is now generally attributed to a Chinese plan; the far heavier engagement of 15 March was a Soviet counter-blow with armour and artillery; and the clash at Tielieketi in Xinjiang that August was initiated from the Soviet side. What the book cannot mention at all is what Moscow was privately weighing that summer — in September 1969 the Soviet journalist Victor Louis, a man used for unattributable messages, floated in the *London Evening News* the idea of extending the "Brezhnev Doctrine" invoked over Czechoslovakia to China, and of a strike on the nuclear installations at Lop Nor. Pierre Frank set that beside the Czechoslovak precedent at the time, in "Concerning 'Limited Sovereignty,'" *Intercontinental Press* vol. 7 no. 38, 17 November 1969 — the reply that this book's readers in Turin and Tokyo were not offered.

On the Great Leap Forward the volume keeps the cluster's largest silence. The catastrophe is present as an economic charge — a "voluntarist" experiment, the 1959 Lushan Plenum, the plunge into "great leaps" — but the word "famine" is spent only on the old China the revolution abolished and on the civil-war wreckage the party inherited, never on 1959–61, and nobody in the book dies of hunger. Be exact about what this does and does not convict them of. Nobody outside China knew the scale of the deaths until the 1982 census was released and the demographers went to work, and the anti-Stalinist left was no better placed: the Fourth International's own resolution got no further than "the near-famine period at the beginning of the sixties." The charge is not that the book failed to supply a number nobody had. It is that its authors chose to render mass death by forced collectivisation entirely in tonnages and plan-figures — and that the reason is not hard to find, since the same event, described plainly, is a photograph of the Soviet countryside in 1932–33, which could not be printed in the USSR until 1987.

All of this converges on the book's real occasion and its blindest spot, the opening to Washington. I. Alexandrov's "Regarding Peking-Washington Contacts" reports the Kissinger visit and Nixon's accepted invitation and treats them as the culmination of the whole indictment: "Peking has endeavoured to normalise its relations with pro-imperialist forces," it charges, striking a bargain with the class enemy behind the back of the socialist camp. Every word of that could be true and the book would still be a monument to what its authors could not see, because in the last months of 1971, as these pages went to press, the Soviet Union was itself some six months from receiving Nixon in Moscow, signing the SALT I agreements, and toasting the same détente with the same president — while American bombers were mining Haiphong harbour. The Fourth International said both halves at once, and said them in the same weeks. The United Secretariat's statement of 31 May 1972 called the Kremlin's conduct at the Moscow summit, in the face of the May escalation in Vietnam, "one of the most brazen and treacherous betrayals of the world revolution in the entire history of Stalinism" (Intercontinental Press vol. 10 no. 23, 12 June 1972). Two bureaucracies were courting the same man in the same year; the book could see the crime only when Peking committed it.

There is one further silence, and it is the most specific and the most damning, because it has a name and a date the book itself supplies. Cataloguing the errors of the Chinese party, the volume mentions "Cheng Chaolin, subsequently expelled from the Party for his Trotskyite views," and files him, in a clause, among the heretics who deviated and were rightly cast out. In that same year, 1972, the Fourth International was publishing that man's name for a very different reason. Chen Chao-lin — a founding member of both the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Trotskyist movement, a man who had worked in Paris with Chou En-lai — had been arrested in the round-up of December 1952 and held without trial ever since. "Chen has lived as a political prisoner for twenty-seven years," the United Secretariat noted in a statement of 16 April 1972, "seven years under Chiang, twenty years under Mao. He is now about seventy-two" ("No Word of Chinese Trotskyists Held in Mao's Jails," Intercontinental Press vol. 10 no. 18, 8 May 1972). These were the one set of Mao's prisoners about whom Moscow had, precisely, no word — because the charge that had put them in a Chinese cell was drafted in Moscow twenty years before and had already killed their Soviet counterparts. The book that files Cheng Chaolin as a deviationist cannot say that he was, as it printed the sentence, in his twentieth year behind Chinese bars for the crime of being what Moscow had taught China to shoot.

Read A Destructive Policy, then, for what it is: a dossier, a good deal of which holds up. The destruction of the Chinese party and its trade unions, the cult of one man, the arrival of the army at the centre of the state, the drift toward Washington, the abandonment of clients like UNITA to the imperialism they would soon serve — these are real, and the book had them early. What it could not have, and what no product of Novosti in 1971 could have been permitted, was the second half of every sentence. Great-power chauvinism, a personality cult, the splitting of the world movement, a military-bureaucratic dictatorship over a silenced working class, a deal with the American president over the heads of the revolution — each charge had two addresses, and the book knew only one city. It has answered a question about Mao by demonstrating, line for line, something about Moscow.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Africa: Politics, Economy, Ideology

The Soviet theory of the non-capitalist road, laid over a whole continent: socialism reached without capitalism, led by revolutionary democrats rather than a working class. A serious Africanist who reads Nyerere and Mboya in the original and argues with them.

Akhmed Akhmedovich Iskenderov

Introduction to the 1972 Edition

Africa: Politics, Economy, Ideology is a compact statement of a doctrine. Akhmed Iskenderov surveys the whole of newly independent Africa — its politics, its economies, its warring ideologies — but the survey is organised throughout by a single thesis, the one this part of the series exists to examine: that the backward, largely peasant states thrown up by decolonisation could cross over to socialism without passing through capitalism, led not by a working class but by "revolutionary democrats," and underwritten by the Soviet Union. Where the drafted Ulyanovsky volume, *Present-Day Problems in Asia and Africa*, argues that doctrine whole and in the abstract, and where *Ten Years of the Ethiopian Revolution* and *USSR and Countries of Africa* apply it to particular states, this book is the "Africa in general" version: the theory laid over an entire continent at once, in the confident register of a state setting out its official line. It is a Progress Publishers title — the imprint on the copyright page reads "© Progress Publishers 1972," and the one appearance of *Novosti* in the book is a footnote citing the Twenty-Fourth Congress report, not a rival publisher. This is not one of the volumes in this series misfiled under Progress; it is the real thing.

The date needs no detective work. The catalogue says 1972 and the book reads as a book of 1971–72: its horizon event is the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the CPSU "held in the spring of 1971," which it treats as the freshest word on the national-liberation movement; Nasser appears as "the late President" (he died in September 1970); the Portuguese-backed raid on Conakry of late 1970 is "the outright aggression against Guinea in the autumn." There is no translation lag to argue about and no earlier edition standing behind it. What was available to the author is what was available in 1971, and the absence list, where one is drawn, has to be built from that year — not from what the 1970s and 1980s would go on to reveal about the states he was describing. Those later events belong to the verdict, not to the silences, and they are taken up as such below.

Iskenderov is best characterised from the book itself, because that is all it is safe to characterise him from. He is a serious Africanist. He has command of the Soviet Orientalist literature — Potekhin, Solodovnikov, the multi-volume institute surveys of classes and the national question — and, less commonly for the genre, he reads the other side in the original: Nyerere's *Essays on Socialism*, Tom Mboya, the Kenyan planning paper, Father Bede Onuoha's *Elements of African Socialism*, Brian Crozier, Hans Morgenthau, Thomas Hodgkin. He argues with these texts rather than merely denouncing them, and the book is the better for it. It is a work of scholarship in the service of a policy, and both halves of that description matter.

The doctrine, in his own words

The theory is stated most cleanly where Iskenderov sorts the continent. The newly independent African countries, he writes, "can be divided into two groups — the socialist-oriented states taking the non-capitalist path of development, and the capitalist-oriented states seeking to adapt the forms and methods of capitalist development and bourgeois democracy to their national conditions." The first group is the book's cause. Its states have officially proclaimed socialism their aim, and some — "the Arab Republic of Egypt, Algeria, Guinea, the People's Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Libya and Somalia" — "are carrying out progressive socio-economic measures which are paving the way for their future advance to socialism." The whole book is a brief for the proposition, which it credits to Lenin, "that the nations breaking out of colonial bondage in our day can take the path of social progress without going through the capitalist stage."

The decisive question, on Iskenderov's own account, is one of leadership, and here he is admirably candid about what his theory requires. In these countries there is barely a proletariat to lead anything: the working class is marked by "numerical weakness," is "semi-proletarian," keeps "close ties with land and their small farms," and in most states no proletarian party exists at all. The revolution is therefore led by others. "A

number of newly-free countries are ruled by revolutionary democratic parties," he writes, and the task before them is not proletarian rule but the construction of "a broad, flexible and solid political popular front" — "a single national democratic front" — uniting all the anti-imperialist classes, the "non-proletarian strata, including bourgeois elements," for the long haul. This front "is not a tactical task of a temporary nature. It is a long-term historical problem." And the class that classical Marxism made the agent of socialist revolution is explicitly relieved of the job, at least for now: "none of the present-day social classes and political parties is in a position to direct single-handedly" the transition, the national bourgeoisie because it is unreliable, and the proletariat because, "being young," it "is as yet incapable of playing the role of hegemonic force in the national liberation revolution."

From this Iskenderov draws the conclusion that gives the doctrine its shape and its vulnerability. "What especially distinguishes the revolutionary movement in Africa," he writes, "is that the national liberation revolution may begin growing into a socialist revolution long before the working class has assumed the leadership of the socialist movement." And the crossing may be gentle. For the states already on the non-capitalist path, "their transition to socialism — in the absence of outside intervention — may assume peaceful forms and come about through the evolution of the ideological and political views of the non-proletarian forces now heading the revolutionary movement, through their adoption of scientific socialism." A stratum that is not the working class, standing in for a working class that scarcely exists, is to evolve a peasant nation into socialism from above — peacefully, by adopting the right ideas, with Soviet aid and the Soviet model before its eyes. That is the doctrine, and Iskenderov deserves the credit of having stated it without evasion.

African socialism against socialist orientation

The book's sharpest and most useful chapters are the ones that police the border of the doctrine — that separate the "socialist orientation" Moscow endorsed from the "African socialism" it did not. This distinction was central to the Soviet line, and Iskenderov works it hard. The African socialism of the Senegalese and Kenyan schools, he argues, is a fraud dressed as an inheritance: it "is apt to regard it as a doctrine designed to substantiate the possibility of a 'third road' somewhere between capitalism and scientific socialism," a road that turns out on inspection to run straight back into "the bourgeois-reformist concepts of socialism that are widely current in the capitalist West." Its appeal to a classless African

past — everybody a worker, the elder a mere guardian of communal wealth, no exploitation of man by man — is a device for denying that class struggle exists at all, and thus for leaving property in place. He is scathing about where it ends up: "'African socialism' is rather a system of an oligarchic nature set up by a handful of privileged people who are concerned more about their own well-being than about the needs of the working masses," which is "perhaps" why "the masses are, as a rule, indifferent" to it. Senghor's version, he notes with some satisfaction, "meet[s] with no support in Africa."

There is real analytic force here, and a reader should say so. The Kenyan sessional paper Iskenderov dissects genuinely did use the language of "African socialism" to justify foreign investment, the encouragement of "national capital," and abstention from nationalisation lest it "discourage additional private investment" — and it genuinely did rest on the claim that "the sharp class divisions that once existed in Europe have no place in African socialism and no parallel in African society." Iskenderov's charge that this was capitalism with a communal veneer was not wrong. It is a good piece of ideological criticism, and it is worth reading on its own terms.

But it is also the seam where the doctrine's method shows. The test Iskenderov applies to African socialism — does the ruling stratum use socialist language to entrench its own privileges while the masses stay passive and property survives? — is a test he never turns on the states he approves. He is even ambivalent about Nyerere, whose ujamaa rests on exactly the communal-past argument he elsewhere demolishes, praising the Arusha Declaration's "sober approach" in one breath while filing Tanzania among the progressive states in the next. And of the national bourgeoisie in his favoured countries he writes that its ideologues are "trying to implant the kind of 'national socialism' that would camouflage the bourgeois nature of their countries' development" — the identical operation he has just convicted African socialism of, now conceded to be at work inside the socialist-oriented camp. The category cuts one way. Where the label is "African socialism," the gap between socialist rhetoric and bourgeois content is the whole indictment. Where the label is "socialist orientation," the same gap is a transitional difficulty to be worked through with Soviet help.

What permanent revolution answered

Iskenderov's doctrine is not new, and neither is the objection to it. The "single national democratic front" governing a peasant nation through an intermediate,

neither-bourgeois-nor-proletarian stage is the lineal heir of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" that the Communist International prescribed for the colonial East in the 1920s — and it is precisely the construction that Trotsky's *The Permanent Revolution* (1930) was written to refute. The refutation was in print more than forty years before this book, and it reads as though addressed to it.

Its second thesis states the colonial case directly: "With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses." The quarrel is not over whether Africa's peasant nations could be liberated; Trotsky insisted, as Iskenderov does, that the peasantry is decisive and that these tasks are revolutionary. The quarrel is over the substitute. Can a stratum that is not the working class — the "revolutionary democrats," the progressive officers, the national-democratic party — stand in for a working class that barely exists and administer socialism into being from above? Trotsky's answer was that the intermediate formation Iskenderov's whole argument rests on does not hold: "the peasant follows either the worker or the bourgeois," and "between Kerenskyism and the Bolshevik power, between the Kuomintang and the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is not and cannot be any intermediate stage, that is, no democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants." A "national-democratic" bloc that suspends the class question in a permanent middle is, on this view, a fiction that will resolve under pressure toward one pole or the other. And the leadership question is settled the opposite way from Iskenderov: "the realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletariat vanguard, organized in the Communist Party." A revolution that "may begin growing into a socialist revolution long before the working class has assumed the leadership" is, in these terms, not an African peculiarity but a contradiction in terms.

There is an irony in Iskenderov's own proof texts. To license the peaceful, various roads to socialism he quotes Lenin: all nations "will arrive at socialism — this is inevitable, but all will do so in not exactly the same way, each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy, to some variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat." But Lenin's pluralism, in the very words Iskenderov reproduces, still runs through "the dictatorship of the proletariat" — the thing

Iskenderov's doctrine is built to do without. The quotation grants variety in the form of a destination whose substance the book has quietly discarded.

The deeper failing is one of form, and it is the discriminating test this series has learned to apply. Iskenderov's theory is arranged so that no event can disconfirm it. When a socialist-oriented state advances, the doctrine is vindicated; when a progressive regime falls, the fault lies elsewhere — with imperialism, or with the treachery of the national bourgeoisie, never with the theory that predicted the state's ascent. The book contains a perfect specimen. Discussing the overthrow of Nkrumah, it explains that "the imperialist monopolies sharply reduced the prices of cocoa beans and caused serious financial difficulties for the government of Ghana. After the military coup in this country, the cocoa prices were substantially raised." The coup that destroyed the doctrine's most celebrated African showcase is entered not as evidence against the road but as proof of imperialism's malice. Even the army, which Iskenderov concedes "can play a progressive role in the national liberation movement but can also easily become a tool of the reactionary forces," is a two-headed instrument in exactly the way the theory needs: when officers make a revolution he approves they are revolutionary democrats; when officers unmake it they are imperialism's tools. Success is the road working; failure is the road betrayed or subverted. There is no outcome the framework would accept as showing that a peasant nation cannot, in fact, be walked to socialism by a party that is not the workers' party. A theory that cannot lose is not being tested; it is being professed.

And the one systematic theory of the colonial revolution that contradicts his own is the one Iskenderov never engages. In a book that names and disputes Senghor, Nyerere, Mboya, Onuoha, Crozier and Morgenthau, the words "permanent revolution" do not appear, and neither does the name of Trotsky. The doctrine is stated as though its antithesis had never been formulated. An opponent who is quoted can be checked; an opponent who is not mentioned cannot even be found.

The verdict of the event

Iskenderov invites the harder test all the same, because he names his cases. His roll of socialist-oriented and progressive states — Egypt, Algeria, Guinea, the People's Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Somalia, Ghana and Mali among the older cases — is a list the following two decades went through almost name by name, and the record is close to unanimous.

Egypt, his leading model, was already turning as he wrote: within months of the book's appearance Sadat expelled the Soviet military advisers, and by the end of the decade Egypt had crossed to the American camp and to *infitah*. Ghana's Nkrumah had been gone since 1966, a fact the book records; Mali's Modibo Keita had been overthrown in 1968. Guinea's Sékou Touré died in 1984 and the army seized power within days, opening the country to the market. Somalia's Siad Barre, whose "scientific socialism" Iskenderov counts as progressive, expelled his Soviet patrons in 1977, switched sides in the Ogaden war the doctrine could not explain, and presided over a state that collapsed into war and fragmentation by 1991. Tanzania's *ujamaa*, the villagisation the book admired, was abandoned as a costly failure and the country turned to market reform from the mid-1980s. Algeria backed away from its socialist course and descended, at the decade's end, into civil war. The People's Republic of the Congo — Marxist-Leninist in name from 1969 — formally renounced Marxism-Leninism in 1990–91 and turned to multiparty elections. Of the states on which Iskenderov rested his case, essentially none reached socialism. Most reversed to the market; several collapsed into coup, war, or state failure; the fortunes of their peoples ranged from stagnation to catastrophe.

This is not the cheap wisdom of hindsight. It is the specific prediction of the specific tradition Iskenderov declined to name. The reversals he could categorise only as imperialist subversion or bourgeois treachery were, on the permanent-revolution analysis, the foreseeable resolution of regimes that had suspended the class question in a middle that could not hold. What looked to him like a stage on the road to socialism looked to Trotsky's heirs like a petty-bourgeois or military-bureaucratic formation holding down, in the name of an absent working class, the very masses whose struggle had made the revolution — and that is much closer to what the record shows.

The heirs said so at the time. *Africa in Struggle*, a small mimeographed Trotskyist review of African liberation whose subtitle was "in the whirlwind of permanent revolution," set out in 1975 exactly the counter-thesis Iskenderov's book is built to exclude: that "the idea that there can be some progressive democratic (ie. non-socialist, and therefore capitalist) stage of revolution is false and utopian." "This is strikingly confirmed in Africa," it went on, "where none of the new post-colonial regimes has been able to develop the productive forces, unify the country, establish basic democratic rights, etc. Only a socialist revolution could achieve such ends." And it applied to the very slogan Iskenderov trades in the scepticism he reserves for African

socialism: examining the states that laid "claim to a 'socialist orientation,'" it found nationalisations that left imperialism "considerably strengthened" and co-operatives that "collapsed after burying without trace the government grants which had financed them," the money "appropriated by those politically influential individuals" who ran them. The label was a claim to be tested against the class character of the state, not a stage to be taken on trust. That was the argument in print, from inside our own tradition, while Iskenderov's states were still being celebrated.

What is worth keeping

None of this touches the part of Iskenderov's commitment that was real, and a reader told the whole book is worthless would be misled. Its anti-colonial and anti-imperialist conviction is genuine and, on its own ground, right. The colonial empires were systems of plunder; Iskenderov's account of the era-by-era forms of that plunder — from "the open armed robbery" of primitive accumulation to the export of finance capital — is sound economic history. His central warning has aged better than much of the modernisation theory that opposed it: that formal independence without economic independence is a trap, that neo-colonialism works by tying the new states "to the world capitalist economy" and perpetuating "their unequal position in the system of the capitalist division of labour," and that finance capital is "capable of subjecting, and actually does subject, to itself even states enjoying the fullest political independence." His demolition of the attempt to rename neo-colonialism "interdependence," and to lump the Soviet Union together with the former colonial powers as equally answerable for African poverty, lands cleanly. On the question of who actually freed these countries — the peoples who fought, not the powers that withdrew — he is a useful corrective to a Western literature that too often treated decolonisation as a gift bestowed. And his ideological criticism of African socialism, whatever its double standard, is genuinely acute: the Kenyan and Senegalese schools really were, in large part, what he said they were.

The book is, in short, a capable Africanist's survey harnessed to a doctrine that the capable Africanist could not allow himself to doubt. Its scholarship on colonialism and dependency remains usable; its central thesis was refuted in advance by a tradition it would not name and disproved within twenty years by the fate of the states it praised.

Where the answer is

The reply to this book is not a single passage but a body of work, and the reader should follow it into the sibling volumes and the reply corpus alike. Read Iskenderov's "Africa in general" statement of the non-capitalist path beside Ulyanovsky's Present-Day Problems in Asia and Africa, which argues the same doctrine whole, and beside its applications — Ten Years of the Ethiopian Revolution and USSR and Countries of Africa, where the theory meets the Horn and the record it cannot absorb. The common answer to all of them is The Permanent Revolution (1930), theses 2, 4, 5 and 6 above all, stated in Trotsky's terms before any of these African states existed. And the contemporaneous reply, reaching in the 1970s and on the evidence then available the class characterisation Iskenderov could not, is in Africa in Struggle — which put permanent revolution in its subtitle and turned it, case by case, on precisely the "socialist orientation" this book proclaims.

MARXISM

At the Turning Points of History: Some lessons of the struggle against revisionism within the Marxist-Leninist movement

Four periods of struggle against revisionism, from Proudhon and Bakunin to the oppositions of the 1920s - written by the Central Committee official who supervised what Soviet historians were allowed to publish. The official line on heresy, from the man who enforced it.

Sergei Pavlovich Trapeznikov

Introduction to the 1972 Edition

The organising idea of this book is a calendar. Casting back over the whole history of the movement, S. Trapeznikov proposes "to define four basic periods of Marxism's ideological struggle against revisionism—that vehicle of bourgeois ideology within the labour movement." Each period has its heretics, each ends in their defeat, and each defeat is followed by a fresh outbreak. A periodisation of this kind is not a neutral device. It is a list of who was wrong at each stage of the past, drawn up in order to establish who is wrong now — and the most useful thing a reader can do with this volume is to work through the four periods and notice which names are written down, which are withheld, and which years the calendar declines to number at all.

The periods are these. The first runs from the 1840s to the 1890s, when Marxism fought its enemies from outside: Lassalle, Proudhon, Bakunin, and — in an episode Trapeznikov handles well — the capture of the co-operative and trade-union movements by men like Louis Blanc, funded, he shows from the National Assembly debate of the day, by the French state. The second opens "at the close of the nineties" with revisionism inside the movement: Eduard Bernstein, Georg Vollmar, Rudolf Stammler, then Kautsky, Hilferding, Adler and Bauer. The third opens with October 1917, and its heretics are named at length. The fourth "takes its rise in the postwar period, viz., from the end of the forties to the beginning of the fifties," and here the naming stops.

Start with the third period, because it is where the book commits itself. Trapeznikov gives a full roll: Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsy, the "Left" Communists, the Democratic Centralism group, the Workers' Opposition. He records their offices with bureaucratic

exactitude — "Trotsky up to 1925 stood at the head of the Soviet Union's armed forces; Zinoviev was at the head of the Leningrad Party organisation and of the C.P.S.U.(B.) delegation to the Comintern; Kamenev was Chairman of the Politbureau of the Party's Central Committee; Rykov was head of the Government as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R.; Bukharin was Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper Pravda." He tracks Bukharin's positions from Brest-Litovsk to the "Get rich" slogan with a specificity that suggests he has read the congress transcripts. He narrates the 1927 discussion, the four thousand oppositionists in a party of 700,000, the Fifteenth Congress expulsions. And then, of the men he has just catalogued, he writes: "We have no intention of delving into the measure of guilt of this or that member of the opposition."

Zinoviev and Kamenev were shot in August 1936 after the first Moscow trial. Tomsy killed himself the same month rather than wait for his. Bukharin and Rykov were shot in March 1938 after the third. Trotsky was killed in Coyoacán in August 1940. The book says none of this. It says instead that the Central Committee, in the struggle against them, "did not resort to the simple expedient of weeding out the otherwise-minded, but confided the whole political 'quarrel' to the arbitrament of the Party." The quotation marks around "quarrel" are Trapeznikov's.

Nor is this a narrative that stops at the edge of the Terror and resumes on the far side. The narrative runs straight through. From the Fifteenth Congress the sentences proceed to "the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R., the gigantic strides in industrialisation, the socialist remodelling of agriculture and the cultural revolution," then to the anti-fascist war. The Seventeenth Congress of 1934 appears, and is used as evidence of the oppositionists' duplicity: "at the 17th Congress of the Party they all renounced their erroneous platforms and

conceptions and swore to march in step with the Party. But this was a technique they had often used before." Khrushchev told the Twentieth Congress in February 1956 that of the 1,966 delegates to that Congress, 1,108 were later arrested for counter-revolutionary crimes, and that 98 of the 139 members and candidate members of the Central Committee it elected were shot. Trapeznikov cites the Congress and passes on. Two paragraphs after invoking it he writes that Communists "will always remember and honour the memory of their unforgettable leaders, the Leninist guard of brave professional revolutionaries." The Leninist guard was destroyed in 1937 and 1938 by the party whose continuity this book exists to assert.

The mid-thirties do appear, once, and in the prosecution's voice: "Many publications have appeared in the world today whose authors testify to the fact that in the mid-thirties there existed in the U.S.S.R. illegal organisations uniting politically and ideologically demoralised elements from Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries to Trotskyists, Zinovievites and Bukharinites." That is the charge sheet of 1936–38, re-entered in 1972 on the authority of unnamed "publications," sixteen years after the Twentieth Congress and eleven after the Twenty-Second. Neither of those congresses is mentioned anywhere in the book. The Twenty-Third and Twenty-Fourth are cited repeatedly. The single sentence conceding that anything went wrong reads in full: "The activities of our Party suffered at a definite stage from similar shortcomings and mistakes. We shall not go into the details here, since this question has been fully and adequately dealt with in the Party's published documents concerning the personality cult, voluntarism and subjectivism." The bundling is deliberate — "voluntarism and subjectivism" was the post-1964 formula for Khrushchev, so Stalin's cult and his denouncer's failings are filed together as administrative untidiness — and the verdict follows at once, in the sentence this series keeps meeting in different Progress volumes: "They did not and could not alter the character of the Soviet socialist system."

The name Stalin does not occur in these 107,000 words. It occurs only inside the word "Stalinists," and there only as an insult attributed to others: revisionists, we are told, "were really the first to start dividing Communists into orthodox and unorthodox, hardliners and progressists, Stalinists and anti-Stalinists. They have now given currency to new terms—neo-Stalinists and super-Stalinists."

Whoever wrote that was not a private scholar. The book itself says what it grew out of: addresses delivered "at a general meeting of scientists at the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences,

conferences of department heads and social science instructors of higher educational institutions, seminars of ideological workers in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Tbilisi, Riga, Yaroslavl and other cities." An author addresses the Academy in plenary session; he instructs the country's social-science teachers; he devotes his final chapter to the Central Committee's ruling of 14 August 1967 "On Measures for Developing the Social Sciences," which he treats as a programme he is charged with carrying out; and he lays down that "the social sciences are of a profoundly partisan nature" and that "the more consistently the principle of science's partisanship is applied the more exact, comprehensive and profound will the acquired knowledge be." He also rules on what may be written: it is not correct, he says, "when the over-emphasis laid on shortcomings in some historical publications and works of fiction overshadow the heroic struggle and selfless labour of the Soviet millions." He mentions in passing that he heard Djilas lecture at the Party Higher School in 1946.

The identification is not left to inference. When the Russian edition appeared in the summer of 1971, Intercontinental Press noticed it — reporting Brezhnev's visit to Belgrade, and quoting the New York Times correspondent Alfred Friendly Jr., it described "a book published in Moscow this summer, written by Sergei Trapeznikov, head of the Soviet Communist party Central Committee's department of science and higher education," which called Yugoslavia "a right-revisionist bridgehead established by world imperialism within the Socialist camp" ("Brezhnev Denies 'Brezhnev Doctrine'," vol. 9 no. 35, 11 October 1971). The phrase is in the volume you are holding. So the man who was silent about the fate of the Left Opposition was the official responsible for the conditions under which Soviet historians worked.

That is the context for the fourth period, and for the strangest fact about it. The fourth period's Right revisionism begins in Yugoslavia — that is what the "bridgehead" sentence is about. Tito's name does not appear in the book. Neither does the League of Communists, except once, in the clause recording that Milovan Djilas and Vladimir Dedijer were expelled from it. The entire indictment of Yugoslavia is conducted through two men Yugoslavia had already thrown out, one of them "that fire-eater of modern revisionism." The fourth period's "Left" revisionism is China. The word China occurs once in the book, in a sentence about the Sino-Japanese war of 1894. Peking does not occur. Mao does not occur. The only trace is a single adjective — "the 'Left' quasi-revolutionaries of the Maoist trend" — and one buried riposte, that "imperialism is by no means a 'paper tiger'." A book whose whole purpose is to identify the enemies of Marxism-Leninism in 1972 cannot

write the names of the two states it is attacking. It reaches them instead through Djilas and Dedijer, through Roger Garaudy and Ernst Fischer — expelled from the French and Austrian parties in 1970 and 1969 — and through Ota Šik, whose economic reform is dismissed in a clause about "modern revisionists of the Šik type." Readers of Basmanov and Leibzon's *The Revolutionary Vanguard* (1977) will recognise the method; what is worth noticing is that here it is already being used against governments, five years earlier.

Czechoslovakia is handled the same way. The 1968 invasion is never described. What appears instead is a diagnosis — "This is distinctly traceable in the case of the events in Czechoslovakia. If the former leadership of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia had discovered in time and properly rebuffed the adroit strategy of imperialism the events which caused such grievous consequences might never have taken place" — supported by a Brezhnev quotation and a speech Gustáv Husák gave in the Kremlin, reported in *Pravda* on 28 October 1969. Dubček is not named. The five armies are not named. In their place stands a general principle: "any kind of military interference by the imperialists in any socialist country is bound to meet with an organised rebuff to the enemy on the part of the whole socialist community of nations." That is the Brezhnev Doctrine, phrased so that the tanks become a defence against an invasion that did not occur.

None of this makes the book useless, and it would be dishonest to pretend otherwise. The second period is genuinely researched. Trapeznikov quotes *Evolutionary Socialism* from the 1909 Independent Labour Party edition and reproduces Bernstein's actual positions — that dialectics is "the traitor within Marx's doctrine, a pitfall in the path towards a correct judgement of things," that whether the labour theory of value holds is "immaterial." His account of what happened to Engels's 1895 introduction to *The Class Struggles in France* is substantially right and rests on the letters: Engels protesting to Kautsky that he had been "trimmed in such a fashion that I appear as peaceful worshipper of legality at any price," the unexpurgated text not published until the Marx–Engels Institute issued it in the 1920s. The pages on Bebel, Mehring and Luxemburg being smeared inside their own party are drawn from *Aus meinem Leben* and from Luxemburg's collected works and are worth reading. So is the observation that the co-operative movement grew fastest after defeats — Chartism, 1848, 1905 — which is a real historical argument, not a slogan. And the long quotation from Giolitti's Senate speech of 26 September 1920, explaining why he chose not to clear the occupied Italian factories by force, is a document any historian of that year would want.

The chapters on the scientific and technological revolution are weaker than the reader has been promised. They are lecture prose, and where they touch the questions the Western left was actually arguing about in 1972 — automation, the growth of the technical intelligentsia, what happens to a working class when its composition changes — they announce that under socialism labour "acquires the quality of an engineer's or technician's work" and move on. The one section with real bite is the attack on convergence theory, and it is undermined by its own citations. Trapeznikov's central point — that theories of the "integrated industrial society" work by bracketing the ownership of the means of production — is fair, and the Western left made it too. But he calls Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber "a prominent French ideologist, proponent of the convergence theory" and then quotes *Le Défi américain* warning that free American capital will reduce Europe "to the status of a satellite," which is an argument about capitalist rivalry, not convergence. And he presents Brzezinski and Huntington as stating "point-blank" a proposition that his own quotation shows them merely summarising: the sentence he reproduces begins "the widespread theory of convergence assumes." It is the exposition of a thesis their book was written to dispute.

One claim should be corrected flatly, because it is defamation of a dead man and it is checkable. Among the charges against Social-Democracy the book states: "Karl Kautsky, the ideological leader of German Social-Democracy, received from Hitler a life pension." Kautsky left Germany for Vienna in 1924; his books were burned by the Nazis in 1933; after the Anschluss of March 1938 he fled to Prague and then to Amsterdam, where he died in October 1938, in exile and without means. He received nothing from Hitler.

The deeper failure is structural. In this book revisionism never has an internal cause. It is always penetration — the bourgeoisie "wormed its way," "built up its agent-force within it," worked "through its infiltrated agents." Revisionism is "an infernal machine for corrupting cadres." From which it follows that four defeats have produced four revivals with no explanation available for why, and that the only remedy the schema permits is policing. It is a theory of heresy written by a man whose job was to enforce orthodoxy, and it cannot ask why so many communists, in so many countries, kept arriving at conclusions the Central Committee had ruled out.

The answer this book could not print was being printed. Trotsky had set out the analysis of the bureaucracy that the third period requires and cannot supply, in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) and *The Stalin School of Falsification*

(English edition, 1937); the Dewey Commission's Not Guilty (1938) had examined the charges Trapeznikov quietly re-endorses. And in the very year this translation appeared, an answer was circulating from inside the Soviet Union: Roy Medvedev's *Let History Judge*, written in samizdat by a communist expelled from the party in 1969, published in English by Knopf in 1971 and reviewed by Dianne Feeley in *Intercontinental Press* vol. 10 no. 21, 29 May 1972 — a book that names the Moscow trials, the Kirov assassination and the destruction of the officer corps, and that Trapeznikov's department existed to keep out of Soviet bookshops. *Intercontinental Press* returned to the Medvedev brothers and the currents around them in "The Medvedevs — A Trend in the Soviet Opposition," vol. 10 no. 44, 4 December 1972. Two histories of the same party, written in the same city in the same years: one by a man with an office in the Central Committee, one by a man who typed his manuscript in secret. Only one of them can name the General Secretary who ran the party for thirty years.

INTERNATIONALISM

A Critique of Mao Tse-Tung's Theoretical Conceptions

Nine named Soviet philosophers argue that Mao's Marxism was borrowed vocabulary over something else - and prove, from the texts, that his Yenan lectures were built out of a 1933 Moscow textbook. Dispatched to hold the intellectual ground while Nixon was in Peking.

F. V. Konstantinov and others

Introduction to the 1972 Edition

Most of the Soviet books written against Mao fought on political ground: the Cultural Revolution, the trade unions, the border, the Ninth Congress. This one picks a harder fight. Its charge is not that Mao's policy was wrong but that his philosophy was not Marxist at all — that the vocabulary was borrowed and the content underneath it was something else. The four sections of Chapter One run from ideological origins through "The Meaning of Marxist Terminology in Mao's Writings" and "On the Real Meaning of Maoist Dialectics" to the verdict: "Subjective Idealism Instead of the Materialist View of History." Mao, the book argues, replaced material conditions with will, and theory with the thought of a leader. It is a serious charge, made with real technical equipment, and it is the most dangerous thing Moscow could have chosen to say out loud in 1972.

Unusually for the genre, the volume tells you exactly who wrote what. The Introduction names nine contributors and assigns them by section: V. G. Georgiyev and V. A. Krivtsov on philosophy and chauvinism; Y. G. Plimak and Y. F. Karyakin on revolution, war and peace; G. S. Ostroumov, a lawyer, on arbitrary rule; and four others. The jacket copy adds that it was produced by "the Institute of Philosophy and the Institute of the Far East of the USSR Academy of Sciences, with Academician F. V. Konstantinov and Professor M. I. Sladkovsky as responsible editors" — an institutional signature, not a personal one. Konstantinov was a genuine professional: an Academician, director of the Institute of Philosophy in the 1960s, editor-in-chief of the five-volume Soviet Philosophical Encyclopaedia. Sladkovsky ran the Institute of the Far East. A philosophy institute and an area-studies institute yoked together to produce an export monograph: the commission is legible in the shape of the thing. So is the date — a footnote in the last chapter names an attendee of the reception for President Nixon "during his

sojourn in Peking in February 1972." This is Soviet philosophy dispatched to hold the intellectual ground while the diplomacy moved.

The core of the argument is stated flatly. Mao's postulates — that relations of production outrank productive forces, that "politics and not economics is the command force in socialist society," that moral incentives outrank material ones — "boil down to the thesis that under socialism men's 'subjective activity' has the decisive role to play, which essentially means an urge to subordinate the objective laws of socialist construction to the subjective activity of leaders." The Maoists, it continues, mean by subjective activity not "conscious, purposeful activity of the masses" but "action in realising any subjectivist propositions of the leaders"; the result is "an apology of voluntarism and subjectivism. This is a subjective, idealist standpoint." And the human material on which will operates is blank: the book returns repeatedly to Mao's image of the Chinese people as a sheet of clean paper on which one may write "the newest, the most beautiful characters."

Is the argument any good? In places it is very good, and the reader should know where.

The strongest single passage is philological. Georgiyev sets out the table of contents of a pamphlet, *Dialectical Materialism*, published at Talien between 1945 and 1949 and based on lectures Mao gave in Yan'an, and states the finding: the text "was written on the basis of two Soviet works: the textbook *Dialectical Materialism* (written under the direction of Academician M. Mitin), which was published in Moscow in 1933, and the article 'Dialectical Materialism', in Volume 22 of the first edition of the *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia*." And then: "Mao's pamphlet is essentially a digest of these two works." The book traces which sections of that pamphlet Mao later published as "On Practice" and "On Contradiction," shows a passage where he takes two clauses of a Soviet paragraph and drops the qualifications that followed, and

quotes his own disclaimer at the time: "This lecture course of mine cannot likewise be considered a good one, because I myself have just started to study dialectics."

This holds up. Western scholarship reached the same conclusion independently and later — Nick Knight's edition of the 1937 lecture notes, *Mao Zedong on Dialectical Materialism* (1990), documents the dependence on Soviet textbook material in detail. The Soviet authors got there first, from the texts, and they were right. The related footnote claim, that "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" were "in fact written in the late 1940s and the early 1950s," is overstated as put, but points at something real: the essays as printed in the *Selected Works* were substantially reworked around 1950–52, and the 1937 texts differ.

A second reading is accurate and worth having. Discussing "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," the book notes that Mao replaced antagonistic and non-antagonistic with "contradictions between ourselves and our enemies" and "contradictions within the ranks of the people," and placed the contradiction between the working class and the Chinese national bourgeoisie inside the second. That is what Mao's text says, and calling it a right-opportunist move rather than an ultra-left one is a fair reading. It is also awkward for the rest of the book: here Mao is convicted of being too soft on the bourgeoisie, a chapter away from being convicted of manufacturing class war where none exists.

Elsewhere the philosophy is thinner than it looks. Much of Chapter One consists of quoting Mao and then asserting that a real Marxist would have gone further. Of Mao's Wuchang speech on classes becoming paper tigers, the book objects that "a mere statement of the generally known historical facts does not yet add up to scientific dialectics" — true, and no argument. And one complaint is revealing: that Mao's dialectic "envisages the destruction of mankind and the globe," on the strength of his remark that the earth too must eventually perish. The objection is not to an error but to a mood.

Now the difficulty, which is the whole interest of this volume. If the charge is that a leader's will was substituted for material conditions, and that one man's thought became the measure of theory, no reader needs prompting to ask where else this had happened. The book knows it, and manages the problem in a way that repays attention.

Begin with a count. In 102,000 words of Soviet philosophy about the abuse of Marxism, Lenin is named more than three hundred times. Stalin is named twice. Once as one of the

classics from whom Mao lifts quotations, and once inside a long extract from the 1967 Central Committee Theses on the Fiftieth Anniversary, condemning "Stalin's personality cult which was expressed in the glorification of the role of one man" and closing with the formula that governs the whole series: "These distortions, for all their gravity, did not alter the nature of socialist society, nor did they shake the pillars of socialism." Stalin's own *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* of 1938 — the philosophical section of the *Short Course*, which for a generation of communist intellectuals from Prague to Peking simply was Marxism — is not cited, discussed or mentioned. The near miss is almost a joke: the footnote at the pivot of the plagiarism argument reads "Dialectical and Historical Materialism, Part 1, Moscow, 1933," and that is Mitin's textbook, not Stalin's essay, which merely shares the title.

Consider what Mitin's name is doing there. The standard against which Mao's borrowings are measured is a 1933 textbook produced under the direction of the man who, with Stalin's personal backing, had just destroyed Soviet philosophy as an independent discipline in the campaign of 1930–31 against Deborin and the so-called Menshevizing idealists. Deborin survived it. Jan Sten, who had tutored Stalin in Hegel, was shot in 1937. Mao is convicted of vulgarising a text; the reader is not told what the text was for.

The same mechanism runs through the doctrinal argument. Chapter Five, section 4, is titled "Artificial Aggravation of Class Struggle," and charges Mao with inventing an intensifying class struggle under socialism in order to license permanent repression. The correction offered is that "in the course of socialist construction the bitterness of the class struggle is moderated," and that under socialism "antagonism disappears but contradictions remain." That is sound Leninism, and it is also the exact repudiation of Stalin's thesis of 1937 — that the closer socialism comes, the fiercer the resistance of the defeated classes — which was the theoretical warrant for the Terror. The book states the correct doctrine and never says whose it is correcting, so a reader in Turin or Tokyo is left to suppose Mao thought of it himself.

And then, once, the book walks right up to the edge. Chapter Four argues that revolution requires coercion but that "the antitoxin may well become... a potent toxin," and that Marxists must "keep violence down to a minimum at every stage of the struggle." Narrating 1918, it observes that Soviet power had to create "special agencies and apparatuses of class suppression — the Red Army and the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission," and then this: "However, the existence of

special apparatuses of coercion was to some extent latent with dangerous tendencies and in the event of any relaxation of Party control over these agencies... opened up the possibility for their abuse." The possibility for their abuse. What follows is not a description of the abuse but a quotation from the 1956 Central Committee resolution about "some limitations of democracy" that were "justified by the logic of our people's struggle for socialism." Nothing that happened between 1936 and 1938 is named anywhere in this book. The word for it does not appear.

There is a sharper irony still. The most sustained analysis of the personality cult in these pages is not Soviet but Chinese: the authors quote at length, and with open approval, the 1956 CPC article "On the Historical Experience of the Proletarian Dictatorship," which treated the cult as "a rotten legacy which has come down from mankind's long history," rooted in small-producer society and over-centralisation, and add that it "contained an indirect critique of Mao's personality cult and had been written without his consent." A Soviet philosophy institute in 1972 praising a Chinese text of 1956 for its historical analysis of a phenomenon the Soviet Union had produced, and offering none of its own: that is the book in one page.

The chapter on nuclear war deserves separate handling, because the charge in it is real and the evidence offered for it is not what a reader would want. Plimak and Karyakin quote Mao from the 1930s — war "can only be abolished through war; in order to get rid of the gun we must first grasp it in our hand," and a war "will form a bridge leading world history into a new era" — and answer with the best sentence in the book: "But if it is a bridge, it is one which is made up of corpses." They then report that at the 1957 Moscow Meeting Mao said "if one-half of mankind were destroyed, there would still remain the other half, but then imperialism would be completely wiped out"; that Chinese officials told smaller countries that "in the event of a devastating war, the small countries would have to subordinate their interests to the common interests"; and that Mao told Edgar Snow that on Bikini the wells were potable and the birds were singing, so that "in the eyes of nature and the birds, the mice and the trees the atom bomb was a paper tiger."

The substance is not seriously disputed. Mao did speak in something like these terms at the Moscow meeting of November 1957, before a large audience of foreign delegates, and the remark disturbed people who were in no sense Soviet clients. But look at the footnotes. The Moscow speech is sourced to *China Today*, Moscow, 1969. The Snow interview

is sourced not to Snow but to *Maoism Through the Eyes of Communists*, Moscow, 1970 — another Progress volume, already in this series. The reply to Mao is a Soviet government statement in *Pravda* of 21 August 1963. There is no Chinese-language citation anywhere in the passage; the whole indictment circulates inside Soviet publishing. On the gravest charge in the book, the reader is asked to take Moscow's word for what was said in Moscow. Nor is any counter-case allowed in: no mention of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, and none of what Moscow itself had been considering about Chinese nuclear installations three years earlier. Chapter Three attacks Peking for refusing the non-proliferation and seabed treaties, which is true, without observing that a treaty freezing nuclear weapons in the hands of those who already had them looked different from Peking.

The larger silence is the year. A book denouncing Mao for refusing peaceful coexistence went to press in the months after Nixon shook Mao's hand. A third tradition read the same events and reached a conclusion neither Moscow nor Peking would print: Allen Myers, in *Intercontinental Press* vol. 10 no. 9, 6 March 1972, went through the Shanghai communiqué line by line and argued that Nixon and Mao "had agreed, not to change the world, but to preserve the status quo in Asia" — Washington conceding the five principles of peaceful coexistence and a vague eventual withdrawal from Taiwan, both nearly free, in exchange for Chinese pressure on Hanoi. Myers notes in passing that Chiang Ching's Cultural Revolution slogan "peaceful coexistence corrupts" was "not likely to be inscribed on Peking wall posters in the immediate future." Both sides of the quarrel were being overtaken by the same diplomacy, and neither could say so.

Chapter Two, on Great-Han chauvinism, has hard material in it — Mao's 1936 remark to Snow about Outer Mongolia, the 1954 approach to a Soviet delegation about a Chinese-Mongolian merger, the 1964 conversation with Japanese socialists in which he said China had yet to "present her bill" for the territory between Baikal, Kamchatka and Vladivostok. Those happened. But it dismisses in a footnote the Chinese description of the border treaties as unequal, and the treaties in question, Aigun in 1858 and Peking in 1860, transferred the Amur and Ussuri lands to Russia in precisely the conditions that gave the phrase its meaning. And the state publishing it had sent five armies into Czechoslovakia four years earlier. Czechoslovakia appears once in this book, in a subordinate clause — "the counter-revolutionary action in Czechoslovakia in 1968" — as proof that class enemies persist, with Hungary 1956 alongside it. The chapter denouncing hegemonism contains no self-examination of any

kind.

One sentence in the Conclusion should be flagged because it is simply untrue. Listing resemblances between Maoism and Trotskyism, the book writes: "Trotsky tried artificially to accelerate the world revolution by means of a world war." It carries no footnote, in a book where nearly every assertion carries one. Trotsky argued the opposite for his entire political life. The neighbouring charges are more honest because they are partly true — he did defend the militarisation of labour at the Ninth Party Congress in 1920, and Lenin did oppose him in the trade-union controversy — and it is precisely because the true charge was available that the invented one is revealing.

What, then, is worth reading here? Chapter Three, sections 1 to 3, and Chapter Four, sections 1 and 2 — the Plimak and Karyakin material. These are the pages where the argument stops reciting and starts thinking: the insistence that revolutionary violence was "a necessary and legitimate weapon of the revolution only at definite stages," the warning that the antitoxin becomes the toxin, the careful reformulation that one should speak "not of some kind of 'peaceful transition' and violent proletarian revolution" but "of the peaceful and the non-peaceful ways of socialist revolution," the fair-minded observation that the Chinese leadership's own 1963 letter had conceded that "the Communists always prefer to make the transition to socialism by peaceful means." It has a political function, of course — it is the doctrinal case for the parliamentary road that Western communist parties were then taking, and Chile, where a Popular Unity government had been elected in 1970 and had three years left, is nowhere named. But it is honest about difficulty in a way Soviet philosophy of this period rarely was, and the small initials in its footnotes, "Y.K. and Y.P.," mark the one place in the book where two authors are visibly present rather than one committee.

The answer this book's readers were not offered appeared in the same season, and it made the connection the volume could not. In "The Downfall of Lin Piao," *Intercontinental Press* vol. 10 no. 36, 9 October 1972, Livio Maitan took Lin Biao's death as the test of Maoism's claim to be something new, and wrote that the mechanism by which a designated successor became a traitor overnight was "fundamentally Stalinist, even if in Stalin's time the losers usually ended up facing firing squads." He treated Mao less as the author of a line than as "the balancer, as well as the symbol, of the bureaucratic leadership." That is the charge Konstantinov's authors bring, delivered without the exemption. The earlier instalments are Maitan's "Report on the 'Cultural Revolution'," vol. 7 no. 26,

14 July 1969, and "The Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party," vol. 7 no. 27, 28 July 1969.

One last sentence is worth carrying away. Describing what Maoist epistemology does to ordinary people, Chapter One says that under it the practice of millions becomes "blind, unconscious activity, each of these being no more than a 'little cog' in a gigantic machine run by the hand of the 'great genius'." The metaphor was not new. Stalin had used it about Soviet citizens, approvingly, in a Kremlin toast in June 1945. Konstantinov's authors reach for it as an image of everything wrong with Mao, and do not appear to hear it. That is why the book is worth reprinting: a competent, sometimes acute, occasionally brave philosophical critique of voluntarism, produced by an institution built by voluntarism and unable to say so.

HISTORY

Secrets of the Second World War

A Soviet historian's account of the war's concealed diplomacy, strongest in its twenty-page narrative of the 1939 Polish campaign: Gleiwitz, Westerplatte, the Bzura counter-attack and the defence of Warsaw, documented from Polish sources. Progress Publishers, 1972, with a new critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

Grigory Abramovich Deborin

Introduction to the 1972 Edition

A book called *Secrets of the Second World War* invites one obvious test, and this introduction is going to apply it. The book passes a good deal of it. Where it fails, it fails in a way the three companion volumes in this series did not, and the difference is worth setting out precisely, because it is the difference between a silence and a denial.

Deborin's premise is that unjust wars require concealment and just ones do not. He states it in the foreword and never departs from it: "Secret diplomacy is the resort of those who pursue unpopular policy and have reason to conceal their intentions." Against this he sets the Decree on Peace of October 1917 — "The Government abolishes secret diplomacy" — and draws the conclusion the whole book rests on: "Genuinely democratic policy must be open." He then makes the claim that a reader in 1972 could already check: "When after the war ended many secrets were revealed, it was discovered that the Soviet Union had done nothing in secret from its wartime allies."

The one secret agreement he concedes is one he defends. The Yalta decision that the USSR would enter the war against Japan was kept from the public for a year and then published; Deborin offers this as proof of the rule. It was in fact a secret protocol, signed at Yalta in February 1945 behind the backs of the Chinese government whose territory it disposed of. That he can present it as evidence of openness tells you what the word means here. Ernest Mandel, writing the Fourth International's own full-length account of the war fourteen years later, put the transaction the way Deborin cannot: the Soviet entry against Japan was made "in order to obtain assets which could influence the post-war arrangements in the Far East", and the assets held were South Sakhalin and the Kurils (The Meaning of the Second World War, Verso, 1986, ch. 16, "The Outcome"). Deborin's chapter and Mandel's describe the same instrument. Only one of them calls it a bargain.

Where 1971–72 sits

Three books in this series have now been put to the same question, and each answered it differently.

Soviet Peace Efforts on the Eve of World War II (1973) was a collection of 350 documents that stopped on 1 September 1939, so that the Treaty of Non-Aggression of 23 August survived only at one remove — in a telegram from Tokyo and a reassurance to the Chinese ambassador. It falsified by terminus. Vilnis Sipols's Diplomatic Battles Before World War II (1982) reached the treaty and itemised it clause by clause — Articles I, II, III, ten years — and left the annex out; the word protocol occurs fourteen times in his book, every one of them an instrument the USSR proposed or signed openly. Oleg Rzheshesky's World War II: Myths and the Realities (1984) does not contain the word protocol at all, in some ninety-two thousand words.

Deborin's book runs to roughly the same length as Rzheshesky's. The word protocol occurs once. It is the instrument of German surrender signed at Rheims on 7 May 1945. Katyn, Bessarabia, Bukovina and deportation do not occur. Neither does Trotsky, purge, or 17 September.

But Deborin does something none of the other three does. He raises the question of the partition and answers it. Discussing Western reaction to the treaty, he writes that "West-German historian Kurt Assmann, for one, who endeavours to vindicate the nazi aggression and its abettors, swings out at the treaty and peddles the old lie about an alleged deal partitioning Poland."

The old lie. Not an omission, not a terminus, not a document left in the drawer: a positive denial, in the voice of a professional historian, in a book whose subject is the exposure of concealed agreements. The Secret Additional Protocol of 23 August 1939 divided Poland along the Narew, Vistula and San, placed Finland, Estonia and Latvia in the Soviet sphere

and Lithuania in the German, and recorded Soviet interest in Bessarabia. The German copies were captured in 1945 and published in English by the US State Department in *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939–1941* (1948), edited by Raymond Sontag and James Beddie — twenty-three years before this book was printed. Moscow's line, that they were a Western forgery, held until the commission chaired by Alexander Yakovlev reported and the Congress of People's Deputies condemned the protocols on 24 December 1989.

It is worth being exact about how Deborin's evasion differs from the standard one, because the standard description does not quite fit him. Writing in 1986, Mandel set out the charge in its usual form. The Pact, he wrote in ch. 2, "The Immediate Causes", "contained a secret protocol which, even before that conquest had commenced, implemented a fourth partition of Poland. Therewith Stalin gave the green light to Hitler's aggression, temporarily saving the Third Reich from the nightmare of a prolonged war on two fronts." And then the method: "Russian historiography continues to deny this — by keeping silent about the secret protocol." (Mandel dates the protocol to 27 August. It was signed on the 23rd; the error is his and should not be carried forward.)

Keeping silent is exactly what the three companion volumes do, and Mandel's sentence describes them without adjustment. It does not describe Deborin. He does not keep silent; he speaks, and what he says is that the thing is a fabrication invented by an apologist for Nazism. That is a harder position to hold and a more brittle one. Silence can be maintained indefinitely, because nothing in the surrounding text has to be consistent with it. A denial has to be defended, and the defence has to survive contact with the rest of the book.

Deborin's does not survive two pages.

What makes it collapse is that he supplies the refutation himself, twice, within thirty pages.

First, immediately after the sentence about the old lie, he quotes *Pravda* of 23 September 1939: "The Soviet Government received German assurances that the line formed by the rivers Tissa, Narev, Bug and Vistula would not be crossed." Second, describing the middle of September, he writes: "The Germans went beyond the line where they were to have stopped under a Soviet-German understanding. They crossed the Western Bug and San and entered the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia."

There it is. A line of rivers, agreed with Germany in advance, at which German troops "were to have stopped" — inside

Poland. Deborin needs this line, because it is the basis of his entire case that the Red Army moved in order to force the Wehrmacht back. He cannot have the argument without the agreement, and he cannot have the agreement without conceding the thing he has just called a lie. He calls Toynbee as a friendly witness in the same passage, quoting him that Stalin "had recovered for Russia much of the territory which she had lost in the days of her weakness" — an admission of territorial gain, offered as vindication.

Which is not to say that the case Deborin is defending has no substance in it. It does, and the hostile witness concedes most of it. Mandel grants the premise outright: "Considering the wavering (to say the least) of the French and British governments over military collaboration in the event of a German aggression against Poland, the Soviet government had every right to ensure its immediate safety in case of a German conquest of that country." He grants Deborin's point about the Polish government too, and more bluntly than Deborin dares: the Polish regime's refusal of Soviet military assistance, driven by "class hostility of the Polish landlords and capitalists towards the Soviet Union" and "class fear of the Red Army", "transformed the military negotiations between the Western allied general staffs and the Soviet government in the summer of 1939 into a farce" (ch. 10, "The Opening Gambit in Europe"). A reader who thinks the anti-Stalinist case rests on pretending the Anglo-French and Polish governments negotiated in good faith should read that chapter and abandon the idea.

The disagreement is about what follows. For Deborin, the bad faith of the others licenses the treaty and everything in it. For Mandel it explains Stalin's calculation without excusing its content: "Stalin preferred to ally himself with the likely victor rather than with the probable victim... By acting thus, he undoubtedly helped Hitler commence hostilities by invading Poland." The right to secure the USSR did not require a line drawn through Poland in advance, and it is the line, not the non-aggression treaty, that Deborin has to deny and cannot do without.

The Polish Tragedy, and where 17 September went

The chapter title promises the hardest section in the book, and for twenty pages it delivers a serious military narrative: Operation Himmler and the staged raid on Gleiwitz; the Schleswig-Holstein firing on Westerplatte and thirteen assaults repulsed; the mobilisation ordered only on 31 August, leaving a third of the Polish army unready; the counter-attack of the Poznań Army on the Bzura from 9 to 18 September, which

broke two German divisions and pulled the strike force away from the capital; the defence of Warsaw from 8 to 28 September, its organisation by Stefan Starzyński, the workers' battalions formed from 5 September, the German entry into the ruined city on 1 October; Hans Frank's diary on the order "to devastate them mercilessly"; more than six million Polish dead. Deborin is not sneering at Poland. He is careful to separate the government, which he despises, from the population, whose resistance he documents from Polish sources including the London-published *Polskie Siły Zbrojne*.

And the Red Army is not in this section. The Soviet entry into Poland has been moved out of "The Polish Tragedy" into the section that follows it, which is titled "The First Nazi Retreat." The date 17 September appears nowhere. The Red Army does not invade Poland or partition it; it advances, and the Germans withdraw behind the agreed line, and this is presented — quoting the Soviet military historian D. Proektor — as "the first order of retreat issued by the Hitler Wehrmacht in the Second World War," and as kilometres that saved lives across Europe. The chapter heading tells you which country's tragedy is being narrated and which country's is not.

Here Mandel's second charge lands squarely, and this time without adjustment. Soviet historiography, he wrote, "draws a veil over Stalin's formal opposition to the survival of any Polish state", and the consequences "for the Polish people's attitude towards the USSR remain disastrous to this day" (ch. 2). The veil in Deborin is a chapter division. He has written twenty careful pages on the destruction of the Polish state, sourced partly from the London Poles' own official history, and has then placed the second army that entered Poland that month outside the chapter about Poland. The same movement in Mandel's telling reads: "Stalin too lent a helping hand by cutting off the retreat road for the Polish army when it finally decided to withdraw, and by occupying the Polish Ukraine, thereby adding fuel to Polish anti-Russian sentiment" (ch. 10). Mandel is not merely assigning blame differently. He is describing an event — a retreat route closed — that has no place at all in Deborin's account, because in Deborin's account the Red Army arrives after the fighting it might have affected, into territory the narrative has quietly emptied.

The same section then handles the Baltic and Finland by an elegant compression. The mutual assistance treaties are dated accurately — Estonia 28 September 1939, Latvia 5 October, Lithuania 10 October — and are said to have "prevented seizure of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania by Hitler Germany." What is not here: the ultimatums of June 1940, the single-list elections of July, the admission of the three republics to the

USSR in August 1940, the mass deportations of June 1941. The Baltic states enter the book as sovereign signatories and leave it as Soviet republics, with nothing in between. Finland gets a clause: the Soviet-Finnish war is the fault of "certain Finnish groups, but also their Western abettors." The Soviet attack of 30 November 1939, the shelling at Mainila that preceded it, the Terijoki government under Kuusinen, the expulsion of the USSR from the League of Nations on 14 December 1939, and Soviet dead running well past 126,000, are not mentioned. Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, taken on a Soviet ultimatum of 26 June 1940, are not in the book at all.

They were not omissions anyone else had to make. Mandel lists the same acquisitions in a single clause, as the frontier Stalin spent the first eighteen months of the German war trying to get Churchill to recognise: "the Soviet frontiers of 1941, i.e. recognition of what had been obtained through the Hitler-Stalin pact: the Baltic States, the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia as well as Bessarabia and the Northern Bukovina" (ch. 17). The four territories Deborin either compresses or excludes are, in Mandel's sentence, one list with one origin. That is the whole disagreement in miniature: it is not that Deborin is unaware of the acquisitions — his own book records the treaties that began the process — but that he cannot let them be described together, because described together they name the instrument he has called a lie.

Perfidy, surprise, and a question not asked

The strongest chapter is the third, on Barbarossa, and it contains the book's sharpest self-inflicted wound.

Deborin prints the German directive on concealing the Barbarossa preparations, which instructed that the eastern deployment "is to be portrayed as the greatest deceptive action in the history of wars, aimed at covering up final preparations for the invasion of Britain." He describes the Germans selling the USSR samples of tanks and aircraft as part of the cover. He notes that Ribbentrop's offer in November 1940 that the Soviet Union join the Axis was itself camouflage. And then he writes that despite all of it the deception failed, because Richard Sorge signalled from Tokyo on 15 June 1941 not only the strength and direction of the attack but its date: "The war will begin June 22".

The section is called "Perfidy and Surprise." Having established that Moscow was told the date a week in advance, Deborin never asks how the surprise happened. The answer is given entirely in terms of German advantages — a militarised

economy, the resources of occupied Europe, combat experience, 190 divisions, superiority of 1.8 to 1 in men. He then quotes, approvingly, a TASS statement dismissing Western reports of Soviet troop concentrations as "a figment of the author's imagination," and presents the issuing of such denials as prudence. There is no Stalin who disregarded warnings, and no destruction of the Red Army's command in 1937–38, in which three of the five Marshals of the Soviet Union were shot, Tukhachevsky among them in June 1937. The words purge and NKVD do not occur in this book.

The answer Deborin will not write is given in a page of Mandel's second chapter, and it is worth setting the two side by side, because Mandel is not guessing at motives but describing military administration. "The Red Army's complete lack of readiness in 1941 was the direct result of Stalin's disastrous misunderstanding of the political situation in Europe and of Hitler's — i.e. German imperialism's — intentions in the coming war." Tukhachevsky, as First Deputy Commissar for Defence, had argued that German aggression would come in the East; Stalin "was convinced that if the Soviet Union behaved 'correctly' Hitler would not attack". Mandel then names the specific administrative acts: the possibility of near-term war with Germany "firmly suppressed" at the chiefs of staff war study conference of December 1940, and the "State Frontier Defence Plan 1941" issued that April, with which the USSR entered the war, committing the Red Army to hold the forward frontiers and paying "minimal attention to strategic defence". His summary of the two processes running against each other inside the Soviet Union is the sentence Deborin's chapter is built to avoid: Stalin's purges and diplomacy "decapitated the Red Army, disorganised the defences of the country, delivered Poland and Europe to Hitler, and facilitated the Nazi attack on the USSR", while industrialisation under the Plan "enabled the Soviet Union to survive in the end". Deborin has the second half of that sentence, at length and well. He does not have the first half, and the missing half is precisely what would explain the surprise he has spent a chapter establishing should not have occurred. Khrushchev's name does not occur. Neither does the phrase cult of the individual. Stalin appears ninety-odd times, almost entirely as a diplomatic actor at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam — competent, unremarkable, uncriticised and uncredited. This is the Brezhnev-era settlement made visible: not the genius-leader of 1948 restored, but the 1956 indictment quietly withdrawn, with the Party substituted for the man.

What holds

A reader who takes this book for worthless will be badly served, and will be caught out.

The central thesis — that Britain, France and the United States hoped to turn German expansion eastward, and that Munich was the operative act — is substantially sound and is not sustained by assertion. Deborin builds it from Western material: Feis, Michael Freund, the Documents on British Foreign Policy, the Parliamentary Debates, the memoirs of German commanders read in German. He dates the Anglo-German declaration to 30 September 1938 and the Franco-German to 6 December 1938, correctly, and reads them as what they were, guarantees against westward attack purchased at Czechoslovakia's expense. Historians who share none of his politics — Michael Jabara Carley in 1939: The Alliance That Never Was (1999), Geoffrey Roberts across his work on Soviet foreign policy — have argued a version of the same case from wider evidence.

It should be said that Mandel accepts this thesis only in part, and the qualification is instructive rather than damaging. He agrees that "some of the 'appeasers' played with the idea of diverting the aggressive dynamic of German imperialism against the USSR", but holds that they did so "for a short time" and abandoned it after the occupation of Prague in March 1939, once it was clear that a German conquest of Eastern Europe "would give him formidable strength to strike against the British Empire". Chamberlain's policy, on this reading, was "an illusory and foolhardy attempt to outmanoeuvre Hitler, not an acceptance of a Europe dominated by Berlin" — a calculation about rearmament timetables rather than a plan to aim Germany eastward, and the Chamberlain–Churchill quarrel "a conflict over the most effective way to preserve the Empire and to oppose Hitler: now or later" (ch. 2). Deborin's version is stronger and flatter than the evidence carries: he needs British policy to be a design, because a design is what justifies the treaty that answered it. What survives the correction is still substantial — that Munich was the operative act, that the guarantees of September and December 1938 were bought at Czechoslovakia's expense, and that London and Paris were not serious about a Soviet alliance in 1939.

His account of the Warsaw Rising of 1944 is more useful than Rzheshkevsky's, who simply left it out. Deborin covers it, and the coverage is hostile: the Home Army leadership acted politically to forestall the Left, the Soviet government called it "a reckless and fearful gamble," and the failure is laid on the insurgents' refusal to co-operate. Read it against his own figures, though, and the section indicts itself. He records that Soviet aircraft flew "2,243 supply missions" — beginning on

14 September, six weeks after the rising began on 1 August, and after Soviet troops had reached the approaches to Praga on 31 July. More than 200,000 people were killed. The arithmetic is his.

Mandel's account of the same weeks, in ch. 15, "The Final Onslaught", disputes Debodin at the two points where Debodin's version is politically load-bearing. The first is who rose. The *Armia Krajowa*, Mandel writes, was "dominated by the social-democratic PPS rather than by bourgeois reactionaries" — not the class enemy of Debodin's telling, and the insurgents were "spurred on by the ambiguous appeals of Red Army commanders", a detail Debodin's narrative has no room for. The second is the halt: "Stalin blocked all help to Warsaw, letting the Germans do the dirty work of liquidating the *Armia Krajowa* he would otherwise have had to do himself." Mandel is not gentle with the rising's leaders either — he calls it "based upon a doubly-incorrect assumption", about Soviet help and about German weakness on the Vistula, and notes that Stalin had promised that help to Mikołajczyk on the first day and repeated it to Churchill by telegram on 15 August 1944. That the rising was a political act badly judged, and that Stalin let it be destroyed, are not competing findings. Debodin has the first and needs the second not to exist. The Red Army's halt at the Vistula, Mandel records, lasted five months.

The military and economic chapters are professional work. The account of the evacuation of industry eastward, the production figures, the partisan chapters with their named commanders and specific operations, the treatment of Bagration — these rest on the six-volume official History of the Great Patriotic War, cited on nearly every page, and on the *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*. They are Soviet in framing and largely reliable in substance. And the book's insistence that the Soviet-German front was the decisive theatre is simply true, and remains true.

Nor is Debodin wrong to be impatient with the school that treats the postwar map as a diplomatic gift. Mandel's answer to it is the same as his: "Was this outcome decided at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam? Was it, in other words, the product of diplomatic horsetrading, 'mistakes' or even 'betrayals'? To a large extent it was determined on the battlefield" — the division of Europe being "an inevitable result of the Soviet Union bearing the brunt of the war against Hitler" (ch. 16). When German politicians blamed unconditional surrender for the Red Army's arrival in Berlin, Mandel called it "pure demagoguery", and pointed out that at the beginning of 1945 the Wehrmacht still had 147 divisions in the West and Italy

against 185 in the East. Debodin, arguing against the same people in 1971, was arguing on this point for something true. Where the two part company is on what was decided by the bureaucracy that won. Mandel's Eastern Europe is remade from outside — "the victory of the social revolution conducted through a military-bureaucratic apparatus instead of authentic popular revolutions" (ch. 16), a "'revolution from above', with little or no significant popular revolution" imposed "through military-bureaucratic compulsion" (ch. 17). The "ugly political legacy" that bequeathed, Mandel writes, "has profoundly marked the post-war situation, not only in this part of Europe, but throughout the world". That legacy is the subject of Mandel's last three chapters and of none of Debodin's.

Note also what he does not falsify: the extermination camps. The foreword's opening target is Udo Walendy's *Wahrheit für Deutschland* (Vlotho, 1965) and the neo-Nazi collection *Europa in Flammen*, quoted denying that Dachau had gas chambers before May 1945. On Holocaust denial in the Federal Republic of 1971, Debodin was right, early, and better sourced than most.

The commission

Which brings us to why the book exists, and the answer is neither Washington nor Peking. Peking appears once, as a place the Japanese held; Mao is absent; the Sino-Soviet split has left no mark at all. The United States and Britain are attacked steadily but conventionally, for Munich, for the delayed second front, for the Rheims negotiations and the Bernadotte channel.

The live target is Bonn. West German historians are named, quoted and rebutted throughout — Assmann, Walendy, Tippelskirch, Görlitz, Jacobsen — and the foreword gives a periodisation of West German historiography, dividing it at about 1965 into a phase that blamed Hitler alone and a phase that exonerates Hitler too, with the National Democratic Party as the agent of the shift. The NPD, founded in 1964, had entered seven state parliaments and had come close to the Bundestag in 1969. This book was published in English in 1971 and reprinted in 1972: the years of the Moscow Treaty of 12 August 1970, the Warsaw Treaty of 7 December 1970 with its recognition of the Oder–Neisse line, the Four Power Agreement on Berlin of September 1971, and the Bundestag ratification fight of May 1972. Debodin's chapter on the new Poland quotes the July 1944 Manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation on the return of the "Western lands, once seized by German conquerors."

That is the commission. This is a brief for the finality of the 1945 settlement in Europe, addressed to Western readers at the moment when the Federal Republic was being asked to accept it, and armed against the German revanchist right. It is détente-era work in the exact sense: the argument for the postwar borders had to be won in English, in front of an audience that was being told by a noisy minority in Bonn that the borders were provisional and the guilt was disputed. Deborin's case against that minority is strong. The price of making it was that the one Soviet document which the German right could quote against him had to be declared a fabrication.

It was not a price that had to be paid, and the demonstration is Mandel, who defends the Oder-Neisse frontier while conceding what Deborin cannot. The expulsion of eleven million Germans from East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia, Poland and Czechoslovakia he calls "an indefensible act" — and immediately adds that it was "not just Stalin's, but an all-Allied, answer to the post-Versailles irredentism of the German minorities in Eastern Europe, as well as a precondition for the adoption of the Oder-Neisse frontier for Poland" (ch. 17, "The Aftermath"). That is a harder sentence to write than anything in Deborin, and it gives the revanchist right nothing, because it refuses the trade the right is offering — the trade in which admitting one crime obliges you to reopen the whole settlement. Deborin took the trade seriously enough to refuse the admission. A polemicist more confident of his ground would have conceded the protocol and kept the border.

The reply

It was made while the war was on, from the Soviet Union's own figures.

The breathing-space argument — Deborin's claim that the treaty gave "the Soviet Union a distinct gain in time" which "largely predetermined the favourable outcome" of the war — was answered by John G. Wright in "How Stalin Cleared Road for Hitler," *Fourth International*, vol. 2 no. 9, November 1941. Wright worked from Malenkov's report to the Eighteenth Party Conference of February 1941, printed in *Pravda* of 16 February 1941, which disclosed that the utilisation of Soviet cement capacity had fallen from 88 per cent in 1936 to 65 per cent in 1939 and 64 per cent in 1940, and that the timber industry was running at 41 per cent. Wright's conclusion was that "Soviet production had been not only stagnating but declining catastrophically throughout the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact." He followed it a month later with "Stalin's Pre-War Purge," *Fourth International*, vol. 2 no. 10, December

1941, tabulating from *Pravda* the commissariats reorganised between February and May 1941 — an average, he calculated, of about one a day through March — and noting that at the Conference itself six members of the Central Committee, Litvinov among them, fifteen alternates and nine members of the Auditing Commission were expelled for "incompetence."

The judgement can be argued with. The evidence is the Soviet party press, six months before Wright wrote. What cannot be argued is that the question Deborin's *Barbarossa* chapter refuses to ask had been asked publicly, from official sources, thirty years before he wrote.

Trotsky had written on the Pact within weeks of its signature, most fully in "The USSR in War" of 25 September 1939, collected in *In Defense of Marxism*; the argument split the Fourth International's American section and was conducted in public while the events were happening. And the specific charge Deborin calls "the old lie" was conceded in Moscow within two decades of this printing.

The mature statement of the case came in 1986, in Mandel's *The Meaning of the Second World War*, and it is the book to read against this one — not because it is the opposite of Deborin, but because it is not. Mandel too holds German imperialism overwhelmingly responsible for the war; too rejects A. J. P. Taylor's attempt to spread the guilt; too regards the Eastern Front as decisive and the Yalta-betrayal literature as demagoguery; too grants the USSR the right to secure itself in 1939. He simply declines to buy any of it with a falsification. His formulation of how the purchase is normally made — that Russian historiography denies the protocol "by keeping silent" — turns out to describe three of the four Soviet volumes in this series exactly and this one not at all, and the exception is more revealing than the rule. Deborin was the only one of the four who thought the question worth answering. Answering it is what exposed him.

How to read it

Take the Munich chapter, the military narrative, the economic chapters and the partisan chapters as the work of a competent historian using the best Soviet sources available to him, and do not dismiss them; the case against Chamberlain and Daladier assembled here is largely the case a serious historian would assemble now.

Then read the foreword and the section on the treaty together, in that order, and watch what happens. A man who has just written that democratic policy must be open, and that the

Soviet Union did nothing in secret, denies the existence of a document, and then, needing its contents for his next argument, describes the river line it drew and the point at which the Germans "were to have stopped." He was not careless. He was a professional, and the seam is where the permission ran out.

Deborin published this under his own name and cited his own earlier Progress volume, *The Second World War*, in the footnotes. He was not an anonymous committee. The chapter he could not write is the one the book is named after.

ARTS & LETTERS

The Profession of the Stage-Director

One of the Soviet Union's leading directors on his own trade: reading a play, finding its genre, rehearsing, staging Chekhov. Clear-headed on Stanislavsky's method of physical actions, and a real defence of competing styles against levelling, published in Moscow in 1972.

Georgi Tovstonogov

Introduction to the 1972 Edition

This is a genuinely different book from most of what Progress Publishers sent abroad. It is not an Institute treatise assembled by a committee under a Central Committee secretary; it is a working theatre director talking, at length and with evident pleasure, about his own trade. Georgi Tovstonogov ran the Gorky Theatre in Leningrad — the house better known abroad as the Bolshoi Drama Theatre — and by 1972 he was one of the two or three most important directors in the Soviet Union. The book is exactly what its title says: a book about the profession of directing. It is about how to read a play, how to find its genre, how to rehearse, how to get a performance out of an actor, how to work with a designer and a composer, how to stage Chekhov and Gorky and Shakespeare so that an audience will sit still for three hours. For long stretches it is very good, and it should be read as what it is before it is read as anything else.

The date is not in doubt. The extract carries "First printing 1972," the latest events it touches are the space flights of the 1960s and the theatrical arguments of the same decade, and nothing in it postdates its spine. The Russian original — the title page survives in the scan in garbled Cyrillic as O professii rezhissyora, "On the Profession of the Director" — predates this English printing; this is the Progress translation, and the imprint in the text is genuinely Progress ("Progress Publishers would be glad to have your opinion of this book... 21, Zubovsky Boulevard, Moscow"). So we are dealing with a 1972 text by a named, real, working artist, not a reprint in a later jacket and not a book misattributed to the wrong house.

Take the craft seriously first, because it earns it. The core of the book is the chapter called "Method," on Stanislavsky's late "method of physical actions" — what Tovstonogov calls the method of active analysis. He describes it more clearly than most textbooks manage: the idea that "the most complex spiritual phenomenon is expressed through a consistent sequence of physical actions," that an actor overloaded with

intellectual preparation becomes "like a rachitic child, his puny body bending under the weight of his overlarge head," that the way in is "physical reconnaissance" with "our arms, legs, back, and all our physical being." He insists that "there is no scenic life without conflict," and then complicates his own rule usefully, warning against "a superficial understanding of conflict as a clash between diametrically opposed viewpoints." He opens the chapter by disowning any claim to authority: his account, he says, is "individual and subjective, and far be it from me to suggest that it is the only valid one." That modesty is not a pose. The "About the Author" page rightly picks out the same quality — a director "so constructive in the complex business of staging a play... that this discourse on the job of the stage-director is so interesting and useful."

The critical writing is honest too. The chapter "Reflections on the Classics" is a worried, undefensive essay about a real problem: that "the classics, such great names as Shakespeare and Pushkin, Ostrovsky, Chekhov and Gorky have somehow imperceptibly slipped out of the Soviet theatre's repertoire," and that "the news that a Soviet theatre is staging Woe from Wit or The Storm is not far short of a sensation." He refuses the easy explanation — "it is not the audiences that are at fault" — and he is candid about the earlier fashion that had, in the name of class analysis, made "many fine works... primitively schematic," so that "all too often the social was vulgarised and reduced to the cheap sociological." A Soviet director in 1972 writing that vulgar-sociological Marxism ruined productions is telling the truth about his own theatre's recent past, and it is worth crediting.

Most striking of all, and most against the grain of what the series usually finds, is that Tovstonogov argues against uniformity. In "The Director and the Times" he defends the coexistence of rival styles — Okhlopkov's romantic monumentalism, Efros's austere psychology, Yefremov's plain naturalism — and writes that "unification and levelling are as intolerable in stage direction as in any other art," that in art "having everyone in step, even if the finest artists are on the flanks, is disastrous." He even ridicules the crude demand that

art keep literal pace with the news — the "largest power station in the world has just been completed — Where is a play about it?" — and dismisses the notion that socialist realism means "conscientious portrayal of life" and photographic verisimilitude, calling those who reduce it to that "timeservers or cowards." This is a defence of artistic pluralism, published in Moscow, and it is real.

None of this is an accident of subject matter. It is the pattern this series has met again and again: the constraint attaches not to the topic but to the register. Where Tovstonogov writes as a craftsman — about the actor's problem, about Chekhov's sound effects, about the difference between Schiller's forest and Ostrovsky's — he is free, specific, and often excellent. The policing begins only when the voice turns to the frame. And the frame is unmistakable when it comes. "The director must not be cold or impartial," he writes in "Civic Responsibility in Art"; "he must mobilise his art against all that is base and philistine, hostile to the ideal our people and its Party serve, the ideal of communism." A director's work, he writes, "will be fruitless unless he knows life, is aware of his civic responsibility, and feels himself to be a direct participant in the historic task of building the new, communist society." These sentences are doing a job, and the job is legitimation. They are also, tellingly, almost the only sentences in the book that could have been written by someone who had never been inside a rehearsal room.

But a 1972 book by a leading Soviet director on the profession of directing carries one ghost it cannot avoid, and the test of the book is what it does with him. Vsevolod Meyerhold was the greatest director the revolution produced, Stanislavsky's most radical pupil and rival, the inventor of biomechanics and of a whole constructivist theatre. In 1938 his theatre was liquidated; in June 1939 he was arrested; he was tortured into confession and shot in February 1940. His wife, the actress Zinaida Raikh, was murdered in their Moscow flat a few weeks after his arrest. He was rehabilitated in 1955, seventeen years before this book appeared. So: was Meyerhold nameable in 1972, and did Tovstonogov name him?

He did. This is the finding, and it is worth being exact about, because it is not the finding the series usually returns. Meyerhold is named ten times, always with respect and never with a slur. Tovstonogov tells the student that it is "essential" to "have a good knowledge of the work of Meyerhold"; he ranks him with Stanislavsky as one of those who "understood the time in which they lived very well"; he writes that "Meyerhold is unthinkable without Stanislavsky." And he offers something no committee could have supplied — a

personal memory: "I was fortunate enough to attend ten rehearsals conducted by Meyerhold." He describes Meyerhold's improvisations as brilliant, and records him stopping an ovation to insist the applause belonged to "my teacher Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavsky." A murdered man is here restored to the lineage, warmly, by someone who was in the room.

And yet look at the phrase inside that same sentence. Tovstonogov attended ten rehearsals at which Meyerhold, he says, "fought with his own formalism." That is the whole of what the book will say about the catastrophe. "Formalism" was not a neutral aesthetic description in the Soviet 1930s; it was the charge — the word that closed theatres and filled cases. To write that Meyerhold "fought with his own formalism" is to convert an accusation levelled at him by the state, on pain of death, into a private artistic struggle he waged and won against himself. The rehabilitation is real and the affection is real, but the manner of his ending has been removed. There is no arrest, no torture, no execution, no 1940. Raikh does not appear at all. The book can name the man because he was rehabilitated; it cannot name what was done to him, because that would require naming who did it.

The same operation runs through the one other victim the book touches. "Another of Stanislavsky's opponents, Solomon Mikhoels," Tovstonogov writes, "towards the end of his life" came round to conceding Stanislavsky's greatness. Mikhoels was the director of the Moscow State Jewish Theatre and the most celebrated Jewish actor in the country. He did not reach the end of a life; he was murdered on Stalin's orders in January 1948, his body left in a Minsk street to look like a traffic accident, as the opening act of the postwar campaign against "rootless cosmopolitans." "Towards the end of his life" is doing precisely the work that "fought with his own formalism" does — it supplies a natural, private ending for a man the state killed. This is the "erasure of the ending" that this series has documented in Soviet name-indexes, where men who were shot are recorded as merely "expelled." Here it is done not in an index but in the affectionate reminiscence of a colleague, which makes it quieter and, in its way, sadder.

What is remarkable is how close Tovstonogov comes to saying the unsayable. In the opening chapter, "Stanislavsky's Time," he twice lets the truth show through the euphemism. Of the canonisation of the Stanislavsky "system" as compulsory orthodoxy he writes: "There was a time when it was forced down people's throats whether they wanted it or not." And more precisely still: "Within the recent memory of all of us there came the order to 'fall into line with Stanislavsky.'" He

even warns that the sudden, unanimous, dateless triumph of the system "should be enough to put one on one's guard." He knows. He knows that Stanislavsky's method was not adopted but imposed — that the "order to fall into line" was the same apparatus, in the same years, that shut Meyerhold's theatre and shot him for refusing to. But the confession is made in the passive voice and the impersonal construction: it was forced, there came the order. The order has no author. It arrives like weather. To name the author would be to name Zhdanov, the campaign against formalism, the destruction of Tairov's Kamerny Theatre, the murder of Mikhoels — and that is the one thing the register will not permit, even as the topic keeps surfacing.

There is a further silence, and it is the size of the job itself. This is a book about the profession of directing in the Soviet Union, and in that profession no play reached a stage without passing the state's repertoire control — Glavlit and the Repertory Committee vetted every production, and a director's working life was in large part a negotiation with that apparatus. It does not appear. The words for it are simply absent from the text. When Tovstonogov discusses repertoire he presents it as a matter of artistic taste and box-office receipts — theatres that once "fought like cats and dogs over plays," managements that "have eliminated from their repertoires 'bad box-office' authors." The picture is of a free market in scripts limited only by the public's appetite. The one institution that every reader in Moscow knew stood between a director and his stage — the censor — is nowhere named. A manual on a policed profession that never mentions the police is carrying a silence exactly the shape of the work.

The Fourth International and the wider anti-Stalinist left had described what this book cannot. Writing in June 1938 — the very year Meyerhold's theatre was liquidated — Trotsky put it in one sentence: "The October revolution gave a magnificent impetus to all types of Soviet art. The bureaucratic reaction, on the contrary, has stifled artistic creation with a totalitarian hand" (*Art and Politics in Our Epoch*, first published in *Partisan Review*; reprinted in *Fourth International*, vol. 11 no. 2, March–April 1950). Eleven years later, and one year after the murder of Mikhoels, Ernest Mandel — writing as Ernest Germain — devoted a whole article to the postwar assault: the "campaign against cosmopolitanism," its open anti-Semitism, the composers Shostakovich and Prokofiev arraigned for "formalistic" works, Eisenstein "literally driven to his death," the denunciation of the Jewish theatre, and socialist realism described exactly as it functioned — an order "to prescribe to artists... the line of thought to be avoided or to be imitated, to imprison creative effort... in a rigorous code of preconceived

rules" ("Purge of Soviet Culture," *Fourth International*, vol. 10 no. 11, December 1949). Set Mandel's phrase beside Tovstonogov's. What Tovstonogov calls, in the passive, the thing that "came" and "was forced down people's throats," Mandel names, with its authors and its victims, as the deliberate policy of the bureaucracy. The two men are describing the same event. Only one of them was free to say who was doing it. (Our reply holdings do not extend to Meyerhold's 1955 rehabilitation itself; the anti-Stalinist press we hold for the 1950s and 1960s does not treat it, which is a fact about the archive, not about the book.)

None of this cancels the craft, and the reader should not let it. The value of *The Profession of the Stage Director* is that its two registers sit on the same page, and the honesty of the one makes the evasion of the other legible. A man who can write that "unification and levelling are as intolerable in stage direction as in any other art," and who attended ten of Meyerhold's rehearsals and never forgot them, knew perfectly well what had been done to the theatre he loved. He wrote a book full of the freedom of the workshop and empty of the freedom that the workshop was denied. Read it for the method, for the Chekhov, for the plea against uniformity — all of it genuine. Then read the two phrases, "fought with his own formalism" and "towards the end of his life," and understand that they are the marks left by the same hand that Trotsky described, still pressing on the profession thirty years on.

PHILOSOPHY

HUMANISM Its Philosophical, Ethical and Sociological Aspects

Soviet orthodoxy taking on the Marxist humanism of the 1960s - Schaff, Garaudy, Fromm and the Praxis school - and Althusser from the other direction, at length and by name. A learned book, and one that reads very differently against the year it appeared.

Mariam Petrosyan

Introduction to the 1972 Edition

M. Petrosyan's Humanism is a book that sets out to win an argument the Soviet state was losing. Its claim is stated on the first page and never afterwards doubted: that a "social system in which concern for man is the supreme law has won through," that socialism is not merely compatible with humanism but is its only genuine form, and that everything else calling itself humanist — liberal, religious, existentialist — is counterfeit. The book is learned, wide-ranging and, in places, a serious piece of philosophical exposition. It is also, read against the year in which it appeared and the country that produced it, one of the most self-refuting documents this series has reprinted. It proclaims socialism the home of human dignity in the same months that its state was sentencing a young man to prison for having documented how that state confined dissenters in psychiatric hospitals.

The text and its moment

Establish the date first, because it is the whole of the argument. The spine reads 1972 — the year of the English translation issued by Progress. But the book itself tells us it is older and younger than that. In the introduction the author explains that this is "a substantially revised and expanded version of the original work put out by Mysl Publishers in 1964" (Mysl, "Thought," was a Moscow house). The core, then, is a de-Stalinisation-era book of the Khrushchev thaw. The revision, however, is not cosmetic. Its latest anchor is the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the CPSU of March–April 1971, quoted repeatedly and at length, with Brezhnev cited by name on scientific-technical progress and on the "fullest possible satisfaction of the people's material and cultural requirements." Its datable references cluster in 1968–71; its five-year-plan figures run forward "to 1975." So the text we are reading is a work of the early Brezhnev years, rewritten around 1971 from

a 1964 foundation. It reads like its real date: confident, consolidated, past the openness of the thaw and settled into the long official freeze.

Who wrote it, and for whom? Petrosyan writes in the collective voice of the Soviet philosophical establishment. The book cites the reports of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, the journals Problems of Philosophy and Philosophic Sciences, and the documents of the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow. It is a monograph in a genre the introduction names explicitly: the "general and detailed exposure of contemporary bourgeois and other brands of quasi-humanism" as "one of the first and foremost tasks of Soviet and other philosophers." This is a commissioned intervention in an international ideological contest, aimed at readers — Soviet and Western — who might be tempted by a rival account of what Marxism has to say about the human being.

The argument the book is answering

To see what Petrosyan is doing, you have to know what he is against. The 1960s had produced, inside and outside the communist world, a revival of what was called "Marxist humanism," built on the rediscovery of the young Marx — above all the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, with their theory of alienated labour. For a generation of thinkers this early Marx offered a Marxism about the human being rather than about iron laws of history: Erich Fromm's 1965 symposium Socialist Humanism; Roger Garaudy, then still the philosophical star of the French Communist Party; the Yugoslav Praxis school around the Zagreb journal of that name; the Polish philosopher Adam Schaff. To Soviet orthodoxy this current was dangerous precisely because it spoke Marxism's own language. It could ask whether alienation had really ended in the USSR, and answer no.

What is striking, and to Petrosyan's credit as an author, is that he does not ignore these figures or dismiss them with a slogan. He engages them by name and at length. Adam Schaff, who had suggested that "in the course of its development Marxism has simply ignored the problem" of the individual, is quoted and rebutted. Garaudy's *Marxisme du XXe siècle* and Lénine are read closely and attacked for wanting to "enrich" Marxism with Fichte and with Sartre. Fromm is engaged over a dozen pages on the theory of "social character." The Praxis thinkers are quoted directly — Gajo Petrović's charge that "the theory of reflection contradicts Marx's understanding of man as the essence of practice" is set down and answered. Petrosyan even fights on a second front: against Louis Althusser, who from the opposite direction was expelling humanism from Marxism altogether, "separating humanism ... from scientific Marxism." Petrosyan wants neither the humanist revisionists' young Marx nor Althusser's anti-humanist science. He wants to claim the whole of humanism for Soviet orthodoxy and leave his opponents with nothing.

His verdict on the revival is that it is an illegitimate splicing job — "an amalgam of 'early' Marxism" with existentialism and neo-Freudianism — and that the men who attempt it are "revisionists" seeking "irreconcilable contradictions" where none exist. Where the humanists find in the young Marx a standard against which existing socialism falls short, Petrosyan finds only a stage in the growth of a doctrine that existing socialism has already fulfilled.

The doctrine

The positive teaching is "real" or "socialist" humanism, and its structure is simple. Pre-Marxist thought, Petrosyan argues, rested on "the concept of man in the abstract, man in general, divorced from all socio-political, economic, legal and other relations." Marxism replaced this abstraction with a man defined by his social relations — a worker, "a creative being, and, as such, the highest of all values." From this it follows, the book says, that humanism cannot be realised in thought or moral exhortation but only in practice: it "proceeds from the necessity of abolishing private ownership of the means of production." Real humanism is therefore not an ideal held against the world but a programme carried out in it — and, on this account, already carried out, in the USSR. "This is what Karl Marx had in mind," Petrosyan writes, "when he linked the concept of real humanism with communism."

Against this stands everything the book files under "abstract humanism": the Renaissance "cult of man," the religious

humanism of the churches, the existentialist humanism of Sartre, and the bourgeois individualism it charges with associating "personal freedom with 'absolute freedom.'" The repeated charge is that these are all hypocritical or illusory — a humanism in words that leaves the actual worker "reduced to the level of a commodity." The book's own summary image, from its opening pages, is of capitalism as "a social leopard changing its spots": a system "inherently hostile to man" that "deafens the world with its proclamations about humanism."

It is worth pausing on how much of Marx this transmits accurately, because a reader told that the whole book is worthless would be misled. Petrosyan's exposition of the 1844 Manuscripts is genuinely competent. He dates them correctly, notes that they lay unpublished until 1927, and reconstructs Marx's argument with care: that a society "dominated, as it is, by private property ... leads to the enslavement of the worker by the products of his own labour"; that the worker's own activity becomes something alien, so that "it belongs to another; it is the loss of his self"; and — the crucial move — that Marx's "historic merit lies in the fact that he revealed not only the economic but also the social basis of the process of alienation." Petrosyan sees clearly that Marx made us "see beyond economic categories to the relations between people." This is the real content the book carries, and it is carried honestly. A student who read these chapters would come away understanding what alienated labour meant to the young Marx.

The concept it dare not turn around

And that is exactly where the book breaks. Having expounded alienation as the loss of the worker's control over his own labour and its products, Petrosyan must ensure that the concept can never be pointed at the society he is defending. The manoeuvre is explicit. When Western writers extend alienation to the socialist countries, he treats it not as an argument to be met but as an outrage to be denounced. The concept, he complains, is "mechanically extended to socialism, and its elimination is pronounced the 'cardinal problem' of socialism." The German commentator Klaus Mehnert, who observed during the events of 1968 that alienation — "that 'brainchild of Marx'" — had come home to roost in the socialist states, is jeered at rather than answered.

This is the hinge on which the whole book swings, and it is worth stating plainly what has happened. Marx's category of alienation describes the condition of a producer who has lost command over the process and fruits of his work to a power standing above him. Petrosyan grasps this and teaches it well

— for capitalism. He simply forbids the question of whether a Soviet worker, in a state where (as we shall see) the trade unions were appointed from above and independent thought was a criminal matter, stood in any comparable relation to a power above him. The tool the book so ably describes is one it is not permitted to use. Real humanism, here, functions as an alibi: because socialism is real humanism by definition, no actual condition of actual human beings under it can count as evidence against the claim.

The same closure governs the book's treatment of its own history. Petrosyan is not silent about Stalinism, but the shape of his acknowledgement is the finding. The Stalin period appears twice, and both times only as a problem of theory. "The conditions created by the cult of Stalin's personality," he writes, "inevitably affected the theoretical elaboration of the problems of humanism in the USSR" — affected the books, that is, not the people. Elsewhere the Terror surfaces only as material for the enemy: anti-communists are accused of "making profit out of the events connected with the cult of Stalin's personality," and of continuing to "speculate on certain negative phenomena of the past." "Certain negative phenomena of the past" is as near as a treatise on the value of the human person, written in the country of the labour camps, will come to naming what was done to millions of human persons. And the sentence's real work is the deflection that follows: the critics, we are told, "draw a veil of silence over mass repression in the capitalist world." The camps become a rhetorical debt owed by the West.

Then there is 1968. A book about humanism published in 1972 could hardly avoid the Prague Spring, whose own slogan — "socialism with a human face" — was a humanist claim made by communists against the Soviet model. Petrosyan meets it head-on and reveals everything. The Czechoslovak reform, he writes, was a matter of "counter-revolutionary forces endeavouring to abolish the socialist order," and the phrase "socialism with a human face" an "inflated propaganda myth about the suppression of personal freedom by socialism." The tanks that entered Prague in August 1968 are thus enrolled in the service of humanism. A doctrine that can describe the crushing of a movement for a more human socialism as itself an act of humanism has told you precisely what its humanism is worth: it is whatever the state does, redescribed.

The year of the book: 1972

Hold the book's central claim — that under socialism "concern for man is the supreme law" — against the calendar of its own publication. On 5 January 1972, in Moscow, Vladimir

Bukovsky was tried. His offence, in substance, was that he had assembled and smuggled to the West documentation showing that Soviet psychiatry was being used as a political weapon — that sane dissenters were being declared insane and confined. He was sentenced to seven years' detention and five of internal exile. This was not a secret buried in archives that Petrosyan could not have reached. It was an international cause célèbre in the very months the revised edition was being prepared, and it went to the heart of his subject: the treatment of the individual human being by the socialist state.

The contrast is not a rhetorical flourish; it is a test the book fails. A treatise proclaiming socialism the fulfilment of human dignity is at no point measured by its author against the actual dignity, liberty, or safety of the human beings in whose name it speaks. The "personal freedom" whose suppression under socialism is dismissed as a "propaganda myth" was, that January, being suppressed in a Moscow courtroom. The book's humanism is never once brought into contact with the human being under the Soviet bureaucracy — and it is the refusal of that contact, not any single false statement, that is the deepest thing wrong with it.

The reply

The reply the book invites comes, first, from the very source it transmits — the young Marx — turned the way its own logic forbids. Marx's alienated labour is not a disease specific to private property in the narrow legal sense; it is the condition of the producer separated from control over his work by a power above him. Whether that power is a shareholder or a Ministry, the worker who cannot criticise, organise independently, or dispose of the product of his labour is alienated in Marx's precise meaning. Petrosyan expounds this and then rules the application out of bounds. The tradition of revolutionary Marxism ruled it back in.

Its classic statement is Leon Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), written thirty-six years before this book and answering it in advance. Trotsky's subject is exactly the "crying divergence between program and reality" that the Soviet philosophers, he wrote, "do not even raise the question of the causes of" — so "we will try to do this for them." His analysis is not moral outrage but social anatomy: the USSR had given birth to a privileged ruling stratum, a bureaucracy that "has turned into an uncontrolled force dominating the masses," raised above society and consuming the lion's share of it. This is Thermidor — Trotsky's term, borrowed from the conservative reaction that ended the radical phase of the

French Revolution — the moment the apparatus rises over the people who made the revolution.

On the precise ground Petrosyan claims — the free development of the personality — Trotsky is devastating and specific. The Soviet bureaucracy, he wrote, "ruthlessly suppresses the progressive side of individualism in the realm of spiritual culture (critical views, the development of one's own opinion, the cultivation of personal dignity)." Every item in that parenthesis is a good that Petrosyan's book promises as the fruit of socialism; every one is a good that Trotsky, from inside the tradition, showed the bureaucracy destroying. Where Petrosyan writes that under socialism the human person flowers, Trotsky observed that the regime "provokes protest at every step, a protest the more burning in that it is repressed," and that "no new values can be created where a free conflict of ideas is impossible." The condition Petrosyan calls the fulfilment of humanism, Trotsky calls the alienation of the producer under a new master — and he does so in the language of Marx that Petrosyan himself had taught.

And the reply is not only retrospective. The anti-Stalinist left answered this book's claims in real time. In the same weeks as the Bukovsky trial, the American revolutionary-socialist weekly *Intercontinental Press* was reporting it closely; its issue of 31 January 1972 printed the full text of "Vladimir Bukovsky's Speech to the Court," in which Bukovsky told his judges that "on the instructions of the KGB psychiatric reprisals are set up against dissenters" and described having been held in psychiatric hospitals "without trial or investigation and contrary to medical evidence of my mental health." Here was the human being under the Soviet state speaking for himself, in the year Petrosyan's book appeared, on the very question the book declared closed. One text tells us socialism has made concern for man the supreme law; the other is the voice of a man that law was being used to silence.

What survives

None of this cancels the book's real merits, and honesty about them is the price of being believed about the rest. Petrosyan's account of the formation of Marx's humanism — the movement from Feuerbach's abstract man to a man defined by social relations, the reading of the 1844 Manuscripts, the insistence that alienation has a social and not merely an economic root — is a genuine contribution to the exposition of the young Marx, and a reader will learn from it. His engagement with Fromm, Garaudy, Schaff and the Praxis school, whatever its polemical purpose, at least does them the courtesy of quotation and argument, which is more than most

volumes in this series manage with their opponents. The book is a serious performance by a serious mind.

But its humanism is a humanism with one question permanently ruled out of order — the question of the human being in front of it. It can describe alienation with precision and forbid you to look for it at home; it can promise the flowering of personality and call the crushing of a movement for a freer socialism an act of humanism; it can make concern for man the supreme law and never notice the man in the dock in Moscow. What Marx gave the world was a method for measuring any society, including one that flew his flag, against the concrete fate of the people who laboured in it. That is the humanism worth keeping, and it is why this book, which teaches it so well and then refuses to use it, is worth reading — as evidence.

Economic Geography of the World

The world as Moscow taught it in 1972: two systems in competition, measured in tons and percentages, at the high-water mark of detente. Written while Allende was still in office and the socialist share of world output was still rising.

Konstantin Spidchenko

Introduction to the 1972 Edition

A geography textbook seems the least ideological of books.

It counts tons of steel and kilometres of railway, lists rivers and populations, and tells you which country grows the most cotton. K. Spidchenko's *Economic Geography of the World*, translated for Progress Publishers by David Fidlon and issued in Moscow in 1972, does all of this competently and often vividly. It is a survey of the whole inhabited planet in some sixty thousand words, written for the general reader and the classroom — a companion, the back cover tells us, to the same firm's *Economic Geography of the USSR*. But it opens not with a map or a river but with the October Revolution, and it never lets the reader forget that this is where the modern world begins. "A decisive role in changing the world," the first chapter states, "was played by the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917." From that sentence onward, the book's real subject is not the distribution of industry across the earth. It is the claim that the earth is now divided into two systems, and that one of them is winning.

That claim is worth taking seriously, because it was taught seriously, to a great many people, in the confident language of measurement. This introduction sets out what the book asserts, tests those assertions against what the book itself reports, and points the reader toward the tradition that answered them.

The book and its moment

First, the date. Progress translations often lag their Russian originals by years, and several volumes in this series carry a jacket date well ahead of the text inside. This one does not. Spidchenko cites the 24th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, held in 1971, as a recent event; he counts "more than seventy young national states" formed "from 1945 to 1972"; he notes that in 1972 the United States "resumed their bombing of peaceful towns and villages" in North Vietnam, which dates the manuscript to Nixon's spring-and-autumn air campaign of that year. Most tellingly, he writes of Chile that "following the

people's victory in the 1970 Presidential elections, Chile has taken the road of far-reaching revolutionary reforms" — present tense, hopeful, and innocent of the military coup that would overthrow Salvador Allende and kill him in September 1973. The book is exactly as old as its spine. It is a document of 1972, the year of the first Nixon–Brezhnev summit and the SALT I arms accord, written at the high-water mark of what Moscow called peaceful coexistence and the West called détente.

That moment shapes the whole tone. The book is buoyant. Its recurring refrain — "the balance of forces in the world arena has decisively changed in favour of socialism" — is offered not as hope but as arithmetic. The socialist share of world industrial output has risen from ten per cent in 1937 to thirty-nine per cent in 1971; the socialist camp now "embraces 14 sovereign countries"; ninety Communist and Workers' Parties count fifty million members. Spidchenko was a Soviet geographer writing an export primer, and the commission is plain from the object itself: this is the Soviet world-picture, rendered into English and sent abroad to be believed. It is not a cadre manual for a particular party — it names the Soviet Union on nearly every page — but a general reader's atlas of the socialist future, addressed to anyone in the English-speaking world willing to look at the planet through Moscow's eyes.

The doctrine: two systems, one of them without crises

The organising idea is stated flatly and early. "States are either bourgeois or socialist depending on their social system." And again: "Depending on which of the two world systems they belong to, individual countries are either socialist or capitalist." The world is not one economy with rich parts and poor parts; it is two economies, running on opposite principles, in competition. To this primary division a third term is added — the "developing countries," former colonies "standing at various levels of economic and political development," many

of them, in the book's optimistic phrase, "taking the road of non-capitalist development leading to socialism." But the developing world is a way-station, not a third system. Every country is ultimately filed under one of the two.

The two systems are not described in the same language, and the asymmetry is the doctrine. The capitalist world is the realm of unevenness, waste and plunder. "The law of the uneven economic and political development of the capitalist states formulated by Lenin," Spidchenko writes, "is manifesting itself in increasing measure in the capitalist world" — sharpening rivalries, partitioning markets, driving the strong to devour the weak. The socialist world, by contrast, is the realm of plan and proportion. Its defining property, quoted approvingly from the 1969 international meeting of Communist parties, is that the new social system is "capable of ensuring planned, crisis-free development of the economy in the interests of the people." Crisis-free is the key word, and it is doing enormous work. Unevenness, in this scheme, is a disease of capitalism. Socialism has cured it.

The cure has a geography of its own: the "international socialist division of labour," administered through the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA, the trade bloc of the socialist states, founded in 1949, often called Comecon in the West). Under it, each socialist country specialises. Hungary makes precision instruments and buses; Bulgaria grows tomatoes and builds hoisting equipment; the German Democratic Republic supplies a fifth of the bloc's mineral fertiliser. This division is presented as the opposite of the capitalist kind: rational, mutually agreed, harmonious. Economic geography, in Spidchenko's hands, is a science of this harmony — a partisan science, openly so. It does not claim to stand above the contest between the systems. It reports the contest, and it knows which side it is on.

Where the doctrine meets the book's own figures

A doctrine that says one half of the world is crisis-free and rationally proportioned invites a simple test: does the book, in its own descriptive chapters, show a socialist world without the disproportions it attributes only to capitalism? Spidchenko is an honest enough geographer that the answer is available in his own pages — and it is no.

Consider the CMEA. If the socialist division of labour were a partnership of equals, one would expect the flows of goods to be mutual. But the book describes something else. "The Soviet Union," it reports, "largely satisfies the import requirements of the CMEA countries in oil, coal, iron ore, timber, machinery

and plant." The smaller states send finished manufactures — instruments, buses, fertiliser — and the Soviet Union sends fuel, ore, and timber. That is not a relationship between equals; it is a hub and its spokes, a single great supplier of raw materials at the centre of a ring of processing economies. Whether one calls this exploitation or simply asymmetry, it is the structure the book condemns wherever it appears in the capitalist world — and it is described here without a flicker of the recognition it extends to, say, Australia, whose interior regions Spidchenko calls, correctly, "her agrarian and raw materials appendages."

Consider next the Soviet Union's own internal map. The book concedes that unevenness existed here once: "When the Soviet Union was established the country's industry was unevenly distributed and there was a sharp difference in the levels of economic development between the central and outlying regions." But it is immediately consigned to the past. Soviet development "gradually narrowed the gap between their economic levels and led to the formation of a rational territorial structure of the economy." The gap is closed, the structure is rational, the tense is settled. Yet the descriptive chapters that follow show a territorial division of labour every bit as pronounced as the capitalist one. Siberia and the Far East appear as a frontier of extraction — "fabulous coal and hydropower resources," "the country's richest, even unique deposits of oil and gas," new pipelines and "timber industrial complexes" reaching east. Central Asia appears as a cotton belt. The European core manufactures; the vast eastern and southern periphery supplies energy, metals, timber and fibre. Spidchenko has a word for exactly this arrangement when he finds it elsewhere. He does not use it here.

Central Asia is the sharpest case, and it is where the book's silences become loudest. Soviet power, Spidchenko writes, brought the region "from feudalism to socialism and national equality" within a single generation, and "created a flourishing socialist economy and culture." What that economy in fact specialises in, the book states with pride: cotton, and almost nothing but. The Central Asian republics produce "more than 90 per cent of the country's output of raw cotton"; Uzbekistan alone took in 4.7 million tons in 1970 and "will increase its production to five million tons in 1975." Spidchenko calls this a "manifestly cotton-growing specialisation" and treats it as an achievement — surpassing the United States, out-producing all of Latin America. A single-crop export economy, imposed on a subject region for the benefit of an industrial core, is precisely the colonial pattern the book denounces in its chapters on Brazil and Africa. Grown in Central Asia, it is a triumph.

And the cost of that triumph is nowhere in the book. The cotton was grown by diverting the two great rivers of the region, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, onto ever-larger irrigated fields — the very "irrigation structures" Spidchenko lists among the region's proud outputs. Those rivers fed the Aral Sea, which by 1972 had already begun the retreat that would become, within a generation, one of the largest man-made environmental catastrophes on earth. The Aral appears exactly once in *Economic Geography of the World*: in a footnote, as one of the "closed drainage reservoirs" not counted in a table of ocean areas. The programme that was draining it is celebrated on the facing pages; the draining itself is invisible. This is not a matter of hindsight unfairly applied. The book's own numbers — ninety per cent of the crop, five million tons and rising — describe the engine of the disaster in the language of success. The same blind spot covers the Kazakh Virgin Lands, whose "development of large tracts of virgin land in the 1960s" is noted only as a gain in grain, with no hint of the erosion and dust storms that the campaign's own Soviet critics were already recording. A geography that can see unevenness, waste and ecological plunder only in the capitalist half of the world has told you something — not about the world, but about itself.

The reply: uneven and combined development, and the one world economy

The tradition of revolutionary socialism that this series draws on answered the "two systems" schema before it was ever printed, and answered it at the root. The answer is the law that Spidchenko's book carefully cuts in half.

Spidchenko attributes to Lenin a "law of the uneven economic and political development of the capitalist states," and quarantines it inside capitalism. But Leon Trotsky, working from the same Marxist inheritance, insisted that unevenness was not a capitalist symptom to be cured but a permanent feature of world history — and that its true form was the law of uneven and combined development. Backwardness, Trotsky wrote in "Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution" (1939), "does not... signify a simple reproduction of the development of advanced countries, with merely a delay of one or two centuries. It engenders an entirely new 'combined' social formation in which the latest conquests of capitalist technique and structure root themselves into relations of feudal and pre-feudal barbarism." The advanced and the backward are not two systems side by side; they interpenetrate, within single countries and across the whole globe, because there is only one world economy and every part of it develops under the

pressure of every other.

This is the point on which the whole "two systems" picture breaks. In *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), Trotsky turned exactly this argument against Stalin's doctrine of socialism in one country — the doctrine from which Spidchenko's self-sufficient, crisis-free socialist world directly descends. The law of uneven development, Trotsky wrote, cannot be made the foundation of a national socialism, "for it does not replace nor does it abolish the laws of world economy; on the contrary, it is subordinated to them." To imagine a socialist economy sealed off from the world market — proportioned from within, immune to the pressures outside — was to elevate one country's peculiarities "not only above the 'general features' of every capitalist nation, but also above world economy as a whole." A book that files each country under one of two systems, and grants one system a crisis-free life of its own, has made precisely that error into a map.

Trotsky pressed the same case concretely in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), the founding analysis of what the Soviet Union had actually become. The strength of the Soviet economy, he argued there, could not be read off its internal statistics, because "the strength of the Soviet structure is measured in the last analysis by the productivity of labor," and productivity "under a market economy, expresses itself in production costs and prices" — measured against the world, not within a closed circle. However high the walls, the world division of labour reached inside them: "For the world market the ruble does not exist," he wrote, naming the isolation that Soviet planning could not legislate away. The USSR did not stand outside world economy in a separate system; it was a backward, bureaucratically deformed part of a single world economy, subject to its laws whether or not its planners acknowledged them. Spidchenko's serene "crisis-free development" is the official denial of everything Trotsky described — the shortages, the disproportions, the privileged administrative stratum, the productivity gap the book's own comparisons keep circling without naming.

The reader who wants to test the two accounts against each other need only hold Spidchenko's "rational territorial structure of the economy" beside the Central Asian cotton belt and the Siberian extraction frontier that the same book describes, and ask which account fits the facts on the page.

What the book is still good for

None of this makes *Economic Geography of the World* worthless, and it would be dishonest to pretend otherwise.

Much of it is simply competent economic geography, and some of it is better than that. Spidchenko has a real gift for the concrete image — Brazil "resembles a pauper who is sitting on a heap of gold, but is unable to use it" — and where his politics point him at the crimes of colonialism, he sees clearly and reports plainly. His pages on Africa quote Marx on the slave trade turning the continent into "a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins," and set beside it the plain fact of the plunder of the continent's natural wealth. His analysis of the developing world's distorted economies is genuinely sharp: Brazilian agriculture's "backwardness and... low productivity" are traced correctly "to its export orientation and the existence of landed estates"; Chile's copper and Argentina's beef-and-wheat monocultures are shown as the levers by which foreign, chiefly North American, capital controls whole nations. The book's account of neo-colonialism — the substitution of indirect economic control for direct colonial rule after 1945 — is a serviceable description of a real system, and its factual survey of resources, industries and trade routes across some forty countries remains a usable snapshot of the world economy as it stood in 1972.

The tragedy of the book, and the reason it repays reading against itself, is that Spidchenko possessed every analytic tool needed to see the raw-material periphery, the single-crop dependency, and the ecological cost of forced specialisation. He deploys those tools with skill — on one half of the world. Turned on the other half, the same instruments would have shown him Central Asia's cotton and Siberia's oil and the shrinking sea in the footnote. The doctrine of the two systems is exactly the device that switches the instruments off at the border. Read it, then, for its geography, and read its geography against its doctrine; the book supplies the evidence to convict its own thesis, which is the most that can be asked of an honest textbook written for a dishonest schema.